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AN INQUIRY
INTO THE
MEANING OF THE PROPHECIES

RELATING TO THE
SECOND ADVENT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:

IN A
COURSE OF LECTURES,

DELIVERED IN ST. PETER'S CHURCH, BALTIMORE,

BY

J. P. K. HENSHAW, D. D.

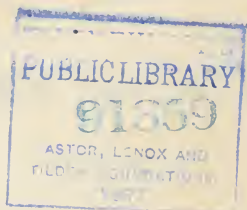
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BALTIMORE:
PUBLISHED BY DANIEL BRUNNER.

1842.





O LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO AT THY FIRST
COMING DIDST SEND THY MESSENGER TO PREPARE
THY WAY BEFORE THEE; GRANT THAT THE MINIS-
TERS AND STEWARDS OF THY MYSTERIES MAY LIKE-
WISE SO PREPARE AND MAKE READY THY WAY, BY
TURNING THE HEARTS OF THE DISOBEDIENT TO THE
WISDOM OF THE JUST, THAT, AT THY SECOND COMING,
TO JUDGE THE WORLD, WE MAY BE FOUND AN AC-
CEPTABLE PEOPLE IN THY SIGHT, WHO LIVEST AND
REIGNEST WITH THE FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT,
EVER ONE GOD, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

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THE following Lectures, delivered in the ordinary course of parochial instructions, are now published to gratify the earnest desire of many who heard them, and in compliance with the recommendation of some valued clerical friends, whose advice was solicited.

The views herein advocated are the same which were maintained by many of the earliest *Fathers*, and by some of the *Reformers*, and which have found powerful support in the writings of the learned and pious *Mede* in the 17th century, and in those of *Bickersteth*, *McNeile*, *Melville*, *Dodsworth*, *Noel*, and other distinguished divines of the Church of England in our own day. The object of the Author will be gained, if this humble inquiry shall have any influence in directing the attention of his clerical brethren to an important, but, it is to be feared, too much neglected branch of Biblical investigation, or in awakening the minds of Christian people to a livelier faith in, and a more diligent preparation for, the coming and kingdom of our Lord.

Baltimore, March 2d, 1842.

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LECTURE FIRST.

THE SECOND PERSONAL COMING OF OUR LORD.

ACTS, CHAPTER i. VERSE 11.

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

THE holy season upon which we have this day entered* has been observed in the church for more than fourteen hundred years as a solemn preparation for the great Festival of Christmas. In the prayers, hymns and lessons, in the gospels and epistles provided for her public services, the Church of Christ lifts up her voice—she lifts it up on high, and says to all her children “BEHOLD YOUR GOD!” Behold him as he came to visit us in great humility, by his sufferings and death to redeem the world! Behold him as he will come again in his glorious majesty to judge

*Advent.

the quick and the dead ! Receive the grace—be thankful for the mercies brought by his first coming ! Prepare for the glories and solemnities that will be connected with his second coming !

In conformity therefore with the services of the season, and in the belief that the subject is of the deepest interest and importance, we would now invite your attention to some inquiries respecting that “glorious appearing of the Great God our Saviour” which is the grand subject of promise and of hope to his Church.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had frequent interviews with his disciples during the forty days which elapsed between his resurrection and ascension. He appeared to them, not for an instant only, and then vanishing like an apparition. But he held free and affectionate intercourse with them on various occasions and under different circumstances. He ate and drank with them ; allowed them to touch his sacred person ; and even permitted Thomas to put his fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into the wound which the spear had made in his side. He afforded them every possible means of proving his identity, and of obtaining the most full and satisfactory evidence of the fact of his resurrection.

We are even informed what were the leading topics of his conversation with them. He instructed

them to wait in Jerusalem for the out-pouring of the Spirit to qualify them for the momentous work entrusted to their hands, and freely spoke to them "*of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*" He undoubtedly gave them all needful directions as to the organization and government of his church, and authorised them to provide for the perpetuity of Christian instruction and discipline by commissioning others, as their successors in the ministry, to preach the gospel and administer its ordinances in all succeeding ages even to the end of the world. We believe also that our Saviour went far beyond this in his communications with his Apostles. That he spake to them of the progress and termination of the present dispensation, directed their view to its grand result, and gave ample instructions as to his second coming to display his glory as the king of Zion—to judge the quick and the dead—and to establish a "dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

As Jews, they had dwelt much upon those strong and glowing passages of the Prophets which led them to expect a conquering Messiah, who would restore their nation to more than its ancient glory, reign upon the throne of David, and, at the same time, sway the sceptre of universal empire—having "the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession." While they were as-

sembled together, with the Master in the midst of them, they asked, "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" Did Jesus reprove them for the folly and vanity of their expectations? Did he inform them that all the prophecies relating to him were fulfilled; and that nothing more was meant by his universal kingdom than the church which was then about to be set up on earth,—or his ruling in the hearts of his people by the influence of the Holy Spirit? Did he reproach them for misapprehending and perverting the Scriptures relating to his glory and kingdom, as he did with respect to those which spake of his humiliation, suffering and death, saying "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have written! Ought not Christ to have suffered those things, and to enter into his glory?" Nothing of the kind! Not one word of reproof or correction fell from his lips. He, by his silence, virtually admitted the reasonableness and piety of their expectations; but simply informed them that the time for their fulfilment had not yet arrived. The prophecies of his kingdom were to be accomplished at some future period. But *when* that period shall be, is one of the profound secrets of the Eternal mind. He had come once into the world, not to reign over it, but to suffer and die for its redemption. He would come again, to display his glory and to establish his kingdom; but of that

last day—emphatically styled by St. Paul the “day of his appearing and of his kingdom,” “*knoweth no man ; no, not the angels which are in heaven ; neither the Son, but the Father.*” The fact that Christ will come again and be revealed as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is certain, because plainly declared in Scripture ; but the *precise time* when his appearance and kingdom will take place, no created mind can positively determine, because it is one of the secret things which belong unto the Lord our God.

On one occasion Jesus was asked “Lord, are there few that be saved ?” But instead of gratifying the curiosity of the inquirers he enforced a great practical duty : “Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Even so when the assembled Apostles asked “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ?” instead of gratifying their curiosity, he fixed their minds upon the great duty which they were required to perform as preparatory to the establishment of his kingdom. “*He said unto them, it is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power ; but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And when he had spoken these*

things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

They gazed upon this amazing spectacle with sorrowful interest. It is fair to presume that they would look upon themselves as left in a state of destitution and orphanage, and be tempted to believe that they would never see their Lord again; but must part with all the high hopes they had cherished in relation to the display of his glory and the setting up of his kingdom upon earth. To preserve them from such despondency, however, they were immediately favored with assurances to the contrary, from the lips of angelic instructors. "While they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" "And they worshipped him, and returned" (from Mount Olivet) "to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God."*

While we reverently abstain from all positive calculations as to the *time* or period when this great event predicted in the text will occur; leaving such calculations to those who have either more discernment or less prudence than ourselves; we may find

*St. Luke xxiv. 52, 53.

it profitable to meditate, as we now propose to do, upon what the Scriptures teach us respecting *the second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ—the circumstances which will precede and be connected with it—and its sublime and glorious results.*

I. We are first to consider *what the Scriptures teach us respecting the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

It is well known to you that different opinions prevail in the Christian world on the subject of the interpretation of prophecies. Some contend that we are to expect a literal fulfilment of them, while others no less confidently assert that, as they are often clothed in figurative language, they are to be fulfilled only in a spiritual sense. It is readily conceded by all that many metaphors are employed by the inspired writers. They often deliver the most important instructions in the form of parables; and, after the manner of the Orientals, freely employ tropes and similes as the drapery in which their valuable lessons are clothed. But where the interpretation is not given, (as it often is by the writer,) persons of sound judgment and reason are at no loss to perceive that the language is figurative, and readily give it the right interpretation. Thus, when our Lord, in his parables, compares his Church to a *net* gathering fishes of different kinds,—to a *field* in which the tares and wheat grow together, when he speaks of himself as a *shep-*

herd, a rock, a door ;—and when in his graphic account of the day of judgment, he speaks of the righteous and wicked as *sheep* and *goats*, we are at no loss to discern his meaning.

Even so in the prophetical books, tropes and figures abound. They are employed however as mere ornaments, or expletives, inseparable from the sublime and poetic style of the respective writers. But as to the *subjects* of prophecy—*the things foretold*—the substantial *facts* shadowed forth by the metaphors, we are of the opinion that the *literal* interpretation should be always adhered to.

Let us test the truth of this principle with reference to some prophecies of the Old Testament which relate to the coming of the Messiah. They are scattered throughout the sacred books from the commencement of Genesis to the close of Malachi, expressed in various language, uttered by divers prophets, and announced at different periods. Are they to be literally or figuratively interpreted? The first is in these words, “ *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed · it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*”* We may say, if we please, that this was merely a prediction of the hostility between the race of serpents and the human race. But we fail not to perceive that it teaches something more.

*Gen. iii. 15.

We infer from it that the Tempter, the evil spirit who employed the agency of the Serpent, would have a conflict with one of the descendants of Eve, in which though he would inflict some injury, his own power would be crushed and destroyed.—We might conjecture that the prophecy might be fulfilled through the agency of one of the human race born after the ordinary course of generation—But behold, there was a more literal fulfilment. It was accomplished by one who was emphatically *the seed of the woman* without a human father, the holy child of a Virgin.

So when it was promised to Abraham that in his “seed all the families of the earth should be blessed”—one might have considered this as nothing more than a prediction that mankind at large would be benefited by the descendants of Abraham. But the accomplishment was more literal. For “*he saith not and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.*”*

Was it foretold that “a virgin should conceive and bear a son:” that “out of *Bethlehem Ephratah*,” one of the cities of Judah, should He come who was to be Ruler in Israel—whose goings forth were of old from everlasting?† Miracles were wrought to secure the accomplishment of the prediction to the very letter. Cæsar Augustus issued a decree that the whole world (i. e. the Roman empire) should be taxed. Jo-

* Gal. iii. 16.

† Micah. v. 2

seph and Mary went up from Nazareth, their usual place of residence, to Bethlehem their family city, to be taxed there : and while there for this purpose, the prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of the son of the virgin. The star of which Balaam spake conducted the wise men of the East to the very spot where the young child was—while the angels of heaven descended to pour forth their songs of joy that the prophecies were fulfilled in the birth of him who should bring glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men.

If we look at the prophecies relating to the *humiliation and sufferings* of our Lord, they afford us strong confirmation of the same truth ; was it foretold that he should be betrayed by his familiar friend who ate of his bread—one of his own disciples, be denied by another, and forsaken by all ? That he should be “ a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—despised and rejected of men ”—that he should “ be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before the shearers, not open his mouth ; that he should give his back to the smiters, and his cheek to them that plucked off the hair ? Behold in the evangelical narrative a literal fulfilment of the prophecies in his course of suffering until he hung expiring upon the cross ! Nor did it cease even then. For while he was in the agonies of crucifixion he uttered the cry which David had put into his mouth a thousand

years before, "My God ! my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* Then was there a minute fulfilment of other predictions. "They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst, vinegar to drink."† "They pierced my hands and my feet"—"they part my garments among them"—and for "my vesture"—which being without seam, and woven from the top throughout, could not be divided, "they cast lots."‡ When the soldiers came to inspect the sufferers, and break their legs by way of hastening their death, finding that Jesus was dead already, they broke not his legs; and thus another Scripture was fulfilled which said "a bone of him shall not be broken." One of the guards which stood near the cross, with careless and cruel unconcern, plunged a spear into his side; and thus another Scripture was fulfilled—"they shall look on him whom they pierced."|| Instead of his body's being carried to the Potter's field like that of a common malefactor, Joseph of Arimathea, a rich member of the Sanhedrim, begged the corpse and deposited it in his own new tomb; and thus was strangely fulfilled a paradoxical prophecy—"he made his grave with the *rich* and with the wicked in his death."§

Now all Christians contend that in the birth, life, sufferings and death of Jesus the prophecies were fulfilled to the very letter. On this ground of their lit-

* Ps. xxii. 1.

† Ps. lxix. 21.

‡ Ps. xxii. 16. 18.

|| John xix. 36. 37

§ Is. liii. 9.

eral fulfilment, we maintain our argument with Deists, in favour of the divine origin of our religion, and that with Jews, in favor of the Messiahship of our Lord. We feel persuaded that the exact correspondence between the prophecies of the Old Testament and the history of the New affords a stable foundation for our faith in the Gospel which can never be shaken.

But the Old Testament Scriptures speak of the Messiah and his coming under widely different circumstances, and in very different terms from those which we have now quoted. They speak of him as coming not in humiliation, but in glory ; not to suffer, but to reign. Not as a despised infant, but as a mighty Conqueror. Not as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—to be despised and rejected of men ; but as a powerful and glorious monarch, who shall exalt his people, trample upon his enemies, and sway the sceptre of universal dominion.

We now invite your attention to some of this remarkable class of prophecies, scattered throughout the pages of the Old Testament. Isaiah having spoken of the Messiah as “a son born—a child given”—goes on to predict of this child that “*the government* shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his *government* and peace there shall be

no end, upon the *throne of David* and upon *his kingdom*, to order and establish it with *judgment* and with justice, from henceforth, even forever.”*

In perfect agreement with the word of the Prophet was the annunciation of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin; “Thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him *the throne of his father David*, and he shall reign over the house of Israel forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”† To the former part of each of these predictions all Christians give a literal interpretation. What sound principle is there that will justify a spiritual and mystical interpretation of the latter part, as if nothing more were intended than the spiritual kingdom of Christ in the hearts of his people, and the extension of his gospel among Jews and Gentiles? Is this to explain Scripture? Is it not rather, “darkening counsel by words without knowledge?”

The first part of the predictions of Isaiah and Gabriel has been literally fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ as “God manifest in the flesh,” in whom “dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” But has the latter part been accomplished? Has he ever been seated upon the throne of David—been acknowledged as the King of the Jews—or established a

* Isaiah, ix. 6, 7.

† St. Luke, i. 31-33.

universal dominion? Must we not, then, as believers in revelation, expect the latter part of these predictions to be literally fulfilled at some future time, even as the former part has been in days that are past?

In the fiftieth Psalm it is written: "The Mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun even unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, hath God shined. *Our God shall come*, and shall not keep silence; *a fire shall devour before him*, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may *judge his people*."* How exactly does this accord with those passages of the New Testament which speak of our Lord's coming amidst the fire and terrors of the last day?

The 2d, 45th, 72d, 93d, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 110th and other Psalms, all celebrate the *reign* of the divine Messiah, and describe the righteousness and the blessings of his kingdom.

Isaiah and Micah inform us that in the last days, "the mountain of the Lord's house" (i. e. Jerusalem or Zion,) "shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills," (i. e. above all the dominions of this world, whether political or religious,) "and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye

* Ps. l. 1-4.

and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And *he* (the Messiah) shall *judge* among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the *light of the Lord*.”* “For *the day of the Lord of Hosts* shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty,—and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be laid low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.—In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.”† “In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cut off a strong nation,

* Isaiah, ii. 2-5; Micah, iv. 1-8.

† Isaiah, ii. 11, 18, 21.

and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth, even forever.”* In Isaiah it is again written: “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him:—with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and *with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.*” (How exactly does this correspond with the words of St. Paul, “that Wicked, whom the Lord will consume with the spirit or breath of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.”†) “And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*”‡

In the wonderful revelations made to Daniel respecting the Messiah’s kingdom and coming, it is thus written: “I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the SON OF MAN came with *the clouds of heaven*, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him *dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him:*

* Micah, iv. 6-7.

† 2 Thess. ii. 8.

‡ Isaiah, xi. 1-10.

his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”* In perfect harmony with this is the prediction of Zechariah: “*The Lord shall be king over all the earth*: In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.”†

These are but a specimen or sample of the many passages in the Prophets which speak of a reigning and conquering Messiah, displaying his glory, and establishing his righteous dominion throughout the world. The Jews of old considered these passages as applicable to the Messiah, and accordingly expected him as a king, to reign upon the throne of David, exalt the Jewish nation, and establish a dominion far transcending, in splendor and power, all the monarchies of earth. Such is the general expectation of that people now. We blame them not for this. The error of the Jews is their being so exclusively taken up with this class of prophecies that they overlook those which no less plainly predicted the coming of the Messiah to suffer and die before he should appear in his glory. But while we use our best efforts to convince them that the prophecies relating to the humiliation and sufferings of the Messiah have been fulfilled in the person and history of Jesus Christ at his first coming, may we not learn

* Dan. vii. 13-14; compare Matt. xxiv. 30, Rev. i. 7. † Zech. xiv. 9.

from them, how those relating to the glory and kingdom of the Messiah are to receive their accomplishment at his second coming?

As the Jews, attracted by the superior splendor of the promises relating to the second advent of Messiah, overlooked and neglected those which relate to his first coming in great humility;—even so, is it not to be feared that Christians are so engrossed by the mercies brought to mankind by his first advent, that they too commonly overlook or misapprehend those passages which refer to his second coming in glorious majesty, at the last day? It is true, we profess to believe that he will “come again to judge the quick and the dead,”—but how mystical, shadowy, and indistinct are our views in reference to the second revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ?

How many suppose that our Lord’s second coming means nothing more than the day of our death, when we shall go individually into the presence of God, to receive our sentence, and be immediately consigned to heaven or hell! Whenever they reflect upon the judgment-day, (for the awful theme will sometimes force itself upon their attention!) what are their views? They form a conception of some mysterious and inexplicable manifestation of the divine glory,—the erection of a great white throne either in heaven, or some other region beyond the boundaries of this globe, where all the human race

will be assembled for the grand Assize; the righteous will be separated from the wicked;—and in the short space of one day of twelve or twenty-four hours, all the stupendous events connected with the second advent of our Lord will be accomplished, and done with forever!

Now, we ask, is this view answerable to the language of the Old Prophets—the instructions of inspired Apostles—the admonitions and warnings of our Lord himself, upon this fearfully grand and majestic theme? This view includes no manifestation of Christ in his human nature,—no establishment of a dominion upon earth,—no restoration of the Jews,—no offering of universal incense to the Lord by the Gentile nations, no overthrow of Antichrist, no first resurrection of departed saints,—no transformation of living ones,—no binding of Satan for a thousand years—no creation of a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness:—In a word, there is an absence of almost all the antecedents and concomitants which the Scriptures teach us to look for in connexion with the second coming of our Lord. To some of those *antecedents* and *concomitants*, as well as to the glorious *results* of our Lord's second advent, I propose to invite your attention in the present course of Lectures.

Let us bear away from the house of God this night the solemn impression, that *the second coming of*

Christ will be an event no less real than his first; and, so far as we are informed, those predictions which relate to the one, will be fulfilled no less truly and literally than those have been which relate to the other.

We are not at liberty to change actual events into figures, or to force upon plain and express passages of holy writ, which relate to facts, a metaphorical and spiritual interpretation. We may properly translate metaphors into the facts which they are intended to symbolize, but it is never lawful, in interpreting God's word, to convert facts into figures. As Jesus Christ once actually came, as the Son of man, to seek and to save that which was lost; so will he actually come again, as the Son of man, in the clouds of heaven, to judge the quick and the dead. It is no unreal picture—no imaginary scene—of which we speak. “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus shall so come again, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” As they saw him ascend with their bodily eyes, so, when he comes again, *“every eye shall see him; and they also that pierced him shall wail because of him.”** As he ascended from the Mount of Olives,—so Zechariah informs us, that in the last day *“his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives”* again.†

* Rev. i. 7.

† Zech. xiv. 4.

Those feet which once trod the streets of Jerusalem in humiliation and sorrow, shall again traverse them in majesty and glory. Those hands which were once employed in acts of benevolence and mercy, shall then distribute blessings and gifts to his saints. That tongue which once spake the accents of truth and love, shall be employed in pronouncing benedictions upon his people, and wrath upon his enemies. And the guilty nation which once exclaimed "crucify him—crucify him!" will then, according to his own prediction, sing "Hosanna to the son of David!" "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."*

We will not now anticipate the solemn and joyful scenes that will accompany and follow that great day of Christ's "appearing and kingdom." But we wish you to realize that he will truly come again to this earth to reckon with his servants and decide their doom. But "who may abide the day of his coming? or who shall stand when he appeareth?" Are we prepared for the coming of our Lord? Are we among the penitent, believing and holy ones, who are "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?" or are we among the impenitent and unholy who will "wail because of him?"

May there be great searchings of heart in this assembly! "For the proud, and all that do wickedly

* Mat. xxii. 39.

shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts: but unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”

LECTURE SECOND.

ANTECEDENT SIGNS OF THE SECOND COMING OF
OUR LORD : THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM,
POLITICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL COMMOTIONS.

ST. LUKE, CHAPTER XXI; VERSES 25-28.

“ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity : the sea and the waves roaring ; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth ; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads ; for your redemption draweth nigh.”

ON the last Sunday evening we entered into an examination of the leading prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, and proved that all those predictions which refer to his first coming as the child of a virgin, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—to be despised and rejected of men,—by a life of suffering and a death of ignominy

to satisfy the claims of law and justice, and thus effect the redemption of the world,—had been fulfilled to the very letter, even in the circumstances which appeared to be trifling and accidental ;—such as the giving him vinegar to drink, the parting of his garments and the casting lots upon his vesture,—the not breaking his legs, the piercing his side, and the making of his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death : all—all were distinctly foreseen by the Prophets: in all, written predictions were literally fulfilled.

Thus far, all Christians are happily agreed.—No believer in Christ would advocate the spiritual or mystical interpretation of the prophecies relating to the first coming of our Lord. History has become their interpreter. It is no longer a matter of faith, but of knowledge. Here we all take our stand in defence of the gospel. In our controversy with infidels, we triumphantly prove the inspiration of the Scriptures, by showing that what was predicted hundreds of years before actually came to pass precisely as foretold. We also successfully maintain our argument with Jews, by showing that the facts which the Prophets foretold respecting the humiliation, birth, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Messiah were literally accomplished in the history of Jesus of Nazareth.

But while there is thus far a perfect agreement

among Christian divines and commentators, there is, with respect to that large class of prophecies in the Old and New Testaments which relate to the second coming, the conquests, kingdom, and glory of the Messiah, a remarkable difference of opinion as to the true interpretation. The majority in our day seem to consider these prophecies as altogether metaphorical, ascribe to them only a mystical and spiritual meaning, and seem to suppose that the literal interpretation is too absurd and visionary to be entitled even to respectful examination. But, on the other hand, JUSTIN MARTYR,* and several other

* The well known quotation from Justin Martyr's dialogue with *Trypho*, the Jew, clearly proves not only his *individual* conviction of the truth of the doctrine that Christ will personally reign upon earth for a thousand years, but also, that such was the received belief of the Christian Church in that early period. He grounds the doctrine "upon plain prophecies of the Old Testament, and express words of the New. He professeth that he, and all other Christians, of a right belief in all things, believe it : joins them who believe it not with them who deny the resurrection ; or else says, that none denied this, but the same who denied the resurrection ; and that indeed they were called Christians, but in deed and in truth were none." Chillingworth says ; "Whatsoever doctrine is believed and taught by the most eminent fathers of every age of the Church, and by none of their contemporaries opposed and condemned, that is to be esteemed the Catholic doctrine of the church of those times ; but the doctrine of the Millenaries was believed and taught by the most eminent fathers of the age next after the Apostles, and by none of that age opposed or condemned ; therefore it was the Catholic doctrine of the church of those times. That doctrine which was believed and taught by *Papias* bishop of Hierapolis, the disciple of the Apostles' disciples, who, (according to Eusebius) lived in the time of the Apos-

of the earlier Fathers have been followed, by learned and pious men in different ages, and by a large and increasing number in our own day, (who in point of talent, learning, and holiness will not suffer by a comparison with others,) in contending for the same principles of interpretation as applicable to the unfulfilled as well as to the fulfilled prophecies; to those predictions which relate to the second, as well as those which relate to the first, advent of our Lord;—to those which relate to the rebuilding of Jerusalem as well as those which relate to its overthrow;—to those which relate to the glory and the kingdom, as well as those which relate to the humiliation and sufferings, of the Messiah.

The longer I live,—the more thoroughly I study the Scriptures, the more do I feel inclined to adopt the latter as the sounder principle of interpretation. I cannot believe that all the glorious things written in the sacred volume about the Messiah's kingdom upon earth are fulfilled in his spiritual reign over the hearts of believers, or in any state of the church which we are likely to behold under the operation

ties, by Justin Martyr, doctor of the church and martyr; by *Melito*, bishop of Sardis, who had the gift of prophecy; witness Tert: and Bellarmine acknowledges a saint; by *St. Ireneus*, bishop of Lyons and martyr :—that doctrine was taught by the most *eminent fathers of that age next to the Apostles and opposed by none.*” Those who desire to see a fuller statement of patristical authority on this point, may consult Chillingworth's additional discourses on the infallibility of the Roman Church, chapter v.

of existing causes. I cannot believe that all the striking predictions relating to the sudden and overwhelming destruction of false systems of religion and antichristian powers, the restoration of the Jews, and the splendors of the new Jerusalem,—the Millennial reign of Christ with his saints, and the creation of a new heavens and a new earth, are to be fulfilled by the slow process of converting Jews and Gentiles, as it is now progressing under human instrumentality. I cannot believe that those passages of Scripture, which speak of the terrors connected with the Lord's coming,—in this chapter and in the other gospels,—were fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem; or that those which speak of the mingled scenes of joy and sorrow—of glory to the righteous, and suffering to the wicked, at the glorious appearing of the Lord—will be fulfilled, as according to the common apprehension, either by our going to him at death, or by a display of his divine presence and the holding of a great assize, in heaven or in the clouds, during a short day of twelve or twenty-four hours duration.

On the contrary, I have attempted to show that this earth, which was the scene of our Saviour's humiliation and sufferings, is destined to be the theatre of his kingdom and glory. That, in fulfilment of Job's prophecy, the Redeemer "*shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,*"—and that holy man (as one of the risen saints,) shall *with his own eyes*

behold him : he will see him for himself, and not another.*

As he really and visibly ascended, so shall he really and visibly descend. He shall come in like manner as he was seen to go into heaven. He shall appear as “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” He shall set up his universal dominion “from sea to sea, and from the river to the end of the earth.”† He shall be acknowledged and adored as “King over all the earth.”‡

Does this appear incredible to you? Do you say “We cannot believe that all these marvels will be accomplished? It cannot be that this poor, guilty, accursed earth will again become the abode of righteousness and the theatre of the Redeemer’s glory! This is too wonderful for our faith!” How then, I ask, can you believe the *mystery of the Incarnation*? The wonders of the first advent are, in reality, greater than those of the second. Surely it requires more faith to believe that “God was manifest in the flesh,” that he “who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” was made in the likeness of men, lived in poverty, suffering and persecution upon earth, and finally died the accursed death of the cross, and became a tenant of the grave,—than to believe that *He* who “was manifested to be the Son of God with power by his

* Job, xix, 25-27.—Surely this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled.

† Ps. lxxii. 8.

‡ Zech. xiv. 9.

resurrection from the dead"—shall come again in glory and majesty to receive the homage of a ransomed world. "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." He will "overturn, and overturn, and overturn, till He whose right it is to reign shall come, and rule king of nations as he now does king of saints."

Of the precise *time* when this great event shall take place, we pretend not to have any accurate knowledge; and upon the whole subject of unfulfilled prophecy it becomes us to speak with diffidence and caution;—remembering always that, although it is our duty, so far as may be allowed to our ignorance, to ascertain what is the meaning of God's word,—that word was never intended *to make us Prophets*. We may be certain of the great facts which are clearly revealed; but of the means by which they are to be brought to pass, or of the precise time of their accomplishment, we should speak with the most profound humility; for they are among the secrets which the Lord has concealed in his own bosom. All confident calculations on these points, however plausible and reasonable they may appear to our short-sighted minds, should be checked by the remembrance of the Master's words, "The Son of man cometh in an hour when ye look not for him. Of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man; no not the angels which are in heaven, neither

the Son, but the Father.” But of the great revealed *fact*, that Jesus will come again in his glory, we may be as certain as that he once came to visit us in great humility.

May this truth be deeply impressed upon our minds! May we be habitually prepared for the coming of our Lord!

In the further discussion of this subject, I shall avail myself of the light thrown upon it by the labors of others, as well as of that which may be obtained by the prayerful study of the Scriptures themselves.

The object aimed at, however, is not a minute and systematic exposition of all the prophecies relating to the subject, but an investigation of those prominent points which are most clearly revealed and of the highest practical importance.

Your attention is now invited to a notice of some of the leading events which are spoken of in scripture as PRECEDENTS, or things which go before the second coming of our Lord. The first to which we shall refer are those presented to our view in the striking and memorable words of the text. “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of

heaven shall be shaken, and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh.”

The prophecies contained in this chapter are precisely the same, and expressed in nearly the same language, with those recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark.* The discourse of which they form a part is that memorable one in which our Lord foretold the destruction of Jerusalem; an event which, according to the general belief of Christians, was a *type*, foreshadowing the greater terrors of the last day. Some have inferred from the words, “this generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled,”† that it is exclusively applicable to that long past historical event.

But *Bishop Horsley* and others have shown, conclusively, that the phrase is not to be thus limited. The word translated “generation,” in some connexions means “*an age*,” in others, *a nation*, and then again it means *a class of men of a particular character*. Thus *the wicked* are called “a generation of evil doers,” and “*the righteous* are counted to the Lord *for a generation*.” Our Saviour called the Jews “a wicked and adulterous *generation*,” because they sought after unpromised signs, and would

* St. Matt, xxiv. xxv. chap. Mark xiii.

† v. 32.

not believe his doctrine and Messiahship. And it is no perversion of his words, or evasion of his meaning, to understand him as saying, that the wicked, unbelieving, Jewish *nation* would not cease to exist, or should "not pass away," till all the things of which he then spake should be fulfilled.*

There must be an excessive strain and perversion put upon our Lord's words if we confine the whole prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army. To that event the words immediately preceding the text do unquestionably relate. "When ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them which give suck, in those days, for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall

*The Greek word Γενεα translated "generation," according to the best lexicographers and critics, ought generally to be translated *race*,—or a people of one common origin. Instances of this are common in our translation of the Scriptures as compared with the Septuagint, and with the Greek Testament. The quotations in the text will serve as specimens from the Old Testament, in *Philippians* ii. 15, the word is translated *nation*; so might it have been here.

be led away captive into all nations ; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." These words refer to the overthrow of Jerusalem, and were awfully accomplished in the sacking and desolation of the holy city, and in the slaughter and dispersion of the chosen people. But then the discourse takes a wider range, and the Divine speaker, no longer confining himself to the case of the Jews and their beautiful city, speaks of events interesting to all the nations of the earth, and which were not to take place till after Jerusalem had been "*trodden down of the Gentiles,*" and the chosen people who escaped the edge of the sword had been "*scattered among all nations, and the times of the Gentiles,*" or the period of their power to oppress the Jews,—should "*be fulfilled.*"

The destruction of Jerusalem was but "the beginning of sorrows." The disciples would hear of wars and rumours of wars, but "*the time is not yet.*" False prophets and false Christs were to arise, who should "deceive, if it were possible, the very elect."* Our Lord forewarned his disciples that they should be persecuted and killed, and "hated of all men for his name's sake." He spake of judg-

* Professor Tholuck, as the result of careful investigation, states that since the advent of Christ *fifty-four* false Messiahs have appeared among the Jews, deceiving many of them by their pretensions to be the Great Deliverer.

ments which were to fall upon the nations, and trials with which the Church was to be visited, while Jerusalem was trodden down by the Gentiles,—as it still is,—and until “the times of the Gentiles” for exercising oppression upon the despised Jews,—*which still lasts*,—“shall be fulfilled.” During the same period of time, the work of propagating Christianity was to go forward till “the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; *and then shall* THE END *come*.”* The end of the world—or, of this dispensation, which will take place at the coming of the Son of man, is to be preceded by those fearful signs and events spoken of in the text. “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken: and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”

“Now what coming of the Lord is this? Not his providential visitation at the destruction of Jerusalem; for then, instead of coming in the clouds of

* Matt. xxiv. 14.

heaven, he did not come at all ; but he stirred up the hearts of the Roman Emperors to come and bring their armies and destroy Jerusalem. Instead of every eye seeing him at that time, no eye saw him, for he remained in the invisible world. Instead of the Jewish nation seeing and knowing him as the person whom they had pierced, they were still rejecting him ; and for that rejection were visited with those desolating judgments.”* Instead of Jews and Christians lifting up their heads, and rejoicing that their redemption was at hand ; the destruction of Jerusalem involved the former in utter degradation, banishment and ruin, and prepared the way for the more bitter and unrelenting persecution of the latter. We conclude, therefore, without doubt, or peradventure, that the words of the text, and what follows, relate to a theme of far higher grandeur and wider interest than that of the overthrow of Jerusalem.

As in that event, the preceding part of our Lord’s prophecy in this chapter was fulfilled to the very letter, even so, the succeeding portions of it will be no less exactly accomplished, in the more wonderful things which will precede and accompany his second personal Advent at the last day. As the revolution of a few years after the words were uttered demonstrated, by historical illustrations, what was contained in the former part of the prophecy, may we not rea-

*Rev. Hugh McNeille.

sonably infer, from the signs of the times, that the revolution of a few years now to come will, by the development of facts, demonstrate what is meant by the awful terms employed in the latter part of it?*

But when we say that there will be an *exact* accomplishment of the prediction,—while we may believe that there will be literally marvellous “signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars,” and also upon the land, and in the sea;—yet, we do not wish to deny that there may be here, as is common in other parts of Scripture, a commingling of figurative and literal instruction: and it may be well to inquire

* Those who would confine our Lord’s discourse to the destruction of Jerusalem, rely much upon the words “when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.” Matt. xxiv. 33. To this *Bishop Horsley* answers: “That *it* is near; so we read in our English Bibles; and expositors render the word *it*, by the *ruin foretold*, or the *desolation spoken of*. But what was the ruin foretold, or the desolation spoken of? The ruin of the Jewish nation—the desolation of Jerusalem. What were *all these things*, which when they should see, they might know *it* to be near? All the particulars of our Saviour’s detail;—that is to say, the destruction of Jerusalem with all the circumstances of confusion and distress with which it was to be accompanied. This exposition, therefore, makes, as I conceive, the desolation of Jerusalem the prognostic of itself—the sign and the thing signified the same. The true rendering of the original I take to be, “So likewise ye, when ye shall see all the things, know that *He* is near at the doors. *He*, that is, the Son of man, spoken of in the verses immediately preceding “as coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” *Horsley’s Sermons*, pages 9-10. This opinion of the Bishop is fully confirmed by the parallel passage in St. Luke, xxi. 31. “When ye shall see these things come to pass, know ye that *the kingdom of God* is nigh at hand.”

What is the meaning of the metaphors? what the interpretation of the signs employed?

When God created lights in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from the night, it is said he made them “for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years.” We understand the agency of those luminaries in the division of time, and their influence upon the seasons;—but what is their meaning as *signs*? An ingenious interpretation of this has been suggested by the dream of Joseph that “the sun, the moon, and the stars made obeisance” to him. When he told it to his father, he exclaimed—“shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?”* “Here the sun is used as a sign for the *head* of the patriarchal family—the *ruler*—the source of authority; he was both king and priest in his family, and therefore a type of Christ.”†

Christ, the source of *all* authority, whether civil or ecclesiastical, is called “the *sun* of righteousness.”

*Gen. xxxvii. 10.

† *Joseph* was also an eminent type of Christ, as having been sold by his own brethren for the price of a slave, exercising prophetic powers, being placed between two malefactors, and after his humiliation and degradation, being made Lord over all the land of Egypt. As it was not till after Joseph’s elevation to princely power that his dream was fulfilled in the sun, moon, and stars doing obeisance to him; so the dominions of this world, whether political or religious, will not all bow down before Christ till he shall be revealed in his glory, at the great day of his appearing and his kingdom.

And therefore, *Faber* and other commentators on prophecy consider the sun, in prophetical language, as *the sign of constituted authority*. The *moon* was used as a sign of the patriarchal *mother*. She had a species of authority over the children ; not in her own right, but by virtue of her marriage. In prophetical language, the moon is a symbol of *the Church*, dependent for all her authority upon her Lord, as the moon is for light upon the sun. The phrase “ powers of heaven,” when used *politically*, means the governments of earth ; when *spiritually* used, the authority of the Church. The eleven *stars*, in Joseph’s dream, meant the eleven sons of the patriarch ; but, in prophetical language, stars indicate the ministers of Christ. In the Revelations, Christ says “ the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the seven angels” (Messengers, or Bishops,) “ of the seven churches ; and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.”*

As to the remaining symbols in the text—by *the earth* is meant the territorial limits of human governments: the *sea* denotes, in prophetical language, multitudes of people ;—and, when in a state of excitement, roaring, and agitation, as here,—people in a state of revolutionary fury and excitement.†

Thus much may suffice for the exposition of the

*Rev. i. 20. †Isaiah, xvii. 12; Ezek. xxvi. 3; Ps. lxxv. 7; Rev. xvii. 15.

particular signs, or symbolical terms employed in the text. The general truth to be deduced from the words is, that, before the second coming of our Lord, there would be political and civil *commotions*, such as had been unexampled in the preceding history of the world. That there should be *wars* more tragical and bloody than were ever carried on by the Alexanders and Philips of ancient times: That the spirit of *revolution* would break forth with uncontrollable fury,—subverting old established dynasties,—making time-honored and venerable thrones shake to their foundations,—reducing political institutions to their elements,—as it were, overwhelming all the pride and splendor of kingdoms, and carrying civil things back to chaos again. Some of these “signs in the sun,” the emblem of earthly authorities and powers, have already taken place, and have been written, as with tears and blood, in the history of modern nations. And, for aught we know, the present temporary calm may be but preparatory to more tremendous convulsions—to tempests of greater fury. It may be, that still more marvellous conflicts and revolutions, than those with which the fame of *Napoleon* is blended, are yet to be entered upon the sorrowful chronicles of this guilty world.

The text also speaks of “signs in the *moon*, and in the *stars* ;” and, according to the symbolical interpretation, teaches us, that, before the second com-

ing of the Son of man, there should be great *religious* excitements,—times of error and darkness,—of persecution and superstition in *the Church*: That many of its ministers—(*stars* in the spiritual firmament,) should fall from their spheres; that the church herself should be involved in darkness, ceasing to give her light; and be the agent, or victim of *persecution*,—indicated by the moon being “turned into *blood*, before the great and terrible day of the Lord shall come.” In the history of Popery and Moham-
medanism,—in the wide-spread apostacies, heresies, schisms, and fearful scenes of persecution, which have disgraced the Christian name in former periods,—we learn that the prophecy has in part been fulfilled;—and the events now in progress in the religious world afford clear indications that the accomplishment of the remainder cannot be very remote.

But we must reserve a more particular consideration of the *antecedents* of the Second Advent until the next Sunday evening, and shall conclude the present discourse with a striking quotation from the writings of one of the most gifted and eloquent ministers of the Church of England.

“Where, where is the man who can contemplate the truths revealed to the Apostles,” respecting the second coming of our Lord, “without catching a

spark of the Apostolic fire," which the subject enkindled in their bosoms?

"In all light there is heat. The man who can proceed in a cold investigation of these revealed glories of God in Christ Jesus, without finding himself once and again hurried away into a warmth of devotional enthusiasm which bids defiance to all rules of logic, has more reason to be ashamed of the deadness of his heart, than to pride himself upon the soundness of his understanding. This exuberance of feeling, however, arising from the overflowing fulness of the transporting subject, is a very different thing from that vapid excitement which is begun, continued, and ended in emptiness."

"Witness its operation upon the mind of St. John, in the Isle of Patmos. 'Behold he cometh with clouds!' This exclamation of the Apostle is grounded upon the last of those sublime visions which had been represented to him, and with the glory of which he was so filled, when he came to testify the truth to the churches, that he is interrupted, as it were, by involuntary bursts of feeling. In his benediction, he had called Jesus Christ 'the faithful witness,' 'the first begotten of the dead,' and 'the prince of the kings of the earth'—with evident allusion to the three-fold revelation of the Lord which he had received—the great Bishop or teacher of the Church—the Lamb as it had been slain, appearing in heaven,—

and the King of Kings returning to the earth. Then, out of the abundance of his inspired heart, burst forth the Doxology, ‘unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory forever and ever!’

“But this was not enough to satisfy his ardent, holy enthusiasm. A chart had been laid before him, marking the course of the voyage by which God had foreordained to carry on the Church and the world through this dispensation. Both are seen sailing together: the one exulting in her pride,—the other, meek and lowly: the one glittering in all the splendor of costly ornaments,—the other in sackcloth: the one changing its aspects under successive commanders, and increasing, as it proceeds, in luxury and pride;—the other, always the same, under one Captain,—neither imitating nor envying the pageantry of its companion: The one ringing with the sounds of revellings, banquetings, and blasphemies;—the other, breathing into every gale the tender accents of earnest, humble prayer.

“They sail on together: the one, pleased with the voyage, and wishing it to last forever;—the other, sore buffeted and weary, almost unto death,—longing for the haven. The whole voyage being traced before the Apostle’s eye, the port at last appears, and then, behold! the Master of both vessels rushes

forth with flaming fire ! Every eye beholds him. The crew of the little tempest-tossed bark shout for joy, saying, ‘this is our Friend : we have longed for him, we have waited for him : now He is come, and he will save us : Hallelujah !’ Then shall doleful cries be heard from on board the great, gay vessel ; for everlasting destruction shall be her portion, and that of all who belong to her.”*

* Rev. *Hugh McNeille*, of St. Jude’s Church, Liverpool.

LECTURE THIRD

MOHAMMEDANISM AND POPERY.

2. THESSALONIANS, CHAPTER II. VERSES 3-4.

“For that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition : who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

IN our last discourse upon the second Advent of our Lord, we entered upon a consideration of the events which were to precede that great day of his appearing and kingdom. We endeavored to show, from the language which Christ addressed to his disciples in reference to it, that by signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars,—the roaring of the sea, and agitations of the earth,—were intended great commotions in civil and ecclesiastical dominions,—revolutions in human governments—apostacies, heresies and persecutions in the church ;—and, in general terms,

we noticed some particulars in which those prophecies had been fulfilled. Here we resume the subject, and proceed to speak of some of the leading events which are represented in the Scriptures as going before the second coming of Christ.

However much this subject may be overlooked and neglected by many Christians of this age, it was contemplated with intense interest by the followers of Christ in primitive times. The solemn warnings and admonitions of their Lord were still sounding in their ears. The inspired Apostles often presented to their view the last day—with all its joy and triumph to the watchful and faithful servants of God—with all its terrors and wrath to a slumbering and guilty world. So vivid were their impressions upon the subject, that they were in danger of overlooking or misjudging the signs that were to precede,—and were liable to be misled by any who, for sinister ends, should teach them that the kingdom of the Lord would *immediately* appear.

So great was this danger, that the Apostle Paul found it necessary to warn the Thessalonians against it. He had, in the first Epistle and in the preceding chapter of this, spoken in the most animated and awakening terms upon this momentous theme.* But then remembering the arts of deceivers who would be ready to pervert his strong language to

* 1 Thess. v. 2-8 ; 2 Thess. i. 6-10.

their own purposes, he begins this chapter with the language of caution. "Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, *as that the day of Christ is at hand*. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

These words evidently teach us that, before the second coming of the Lord, there should be a great *apostacy* on the part of a large body of professing Christians,—and also, the setting up of an influence, nominally religious, which would be in opposition to God, and to the purity and truth of the Gospel. Our Lord also taught that many would come in his name, to delude multitudes,—and accompanied with such plausible pretences and signs, as to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. St. John in his Epistles speaks of *Antichrist*, and in the highly figurative language of the Apocalypse represents the formidable corrupters of the truth and enemies of righteousness who would successively make war with the Lamb and his followers; and also the signal defeat

and ruin which shall overwhelm them at the appearance of Him who has “on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

The view given in the Revelations of the destruction of antichristian powers—the enemies of God and the Lamb,—is perfectly in harmony with what St. Paul says in this chapter of the destruction of the man of sin—the son of perdition—that *Wicked* whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

The prophecy in the text and context, as it appears to me, relates to the great *Papal Apostacy*—its delusions and abominations—its blinding and ruinous influence upon multitudes of souls—and its signal destruction at the coming of the Lord. But we shall not, in this course of Lectures, confine our attention exclusively to this view of the subject; but propose to notice all those great antichristian movements and systems which the Scriptures speak of as preceding the solemnities of the second Advent.

I. The first we notice is *Mohammedanism*. This cannot be strictly called an apostacy in the Church; yet was it a mighty religious movement in which the interests of Christianity were, to a great extent, involved. Its holy book professes great respect for Moses and Christ, as inspired messengers of God;

and its blasphemous author claimed to be the *Paraclete* or Comforter, whom Jesus promised to send to his disciples.*

“In the year of our Lord 606, Mohammed began to profess a very extraordinary intercourse with God: declaring that the angel Gabriel was frequently sent to him, to teach a religion which he was to propagate in the world, being an improving and perfecting both of the religion of Moses and of Jesus as at first delivered, and a reformation of them from subsequent abuses and corruptions.”

Mohammedanism is a religion which strongly asserts the unity of God, and holds all idolatry to be an abomination. With some excellent precepts of virtue, chiefly drawn from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, it has mingled up silly fables and defective morals; and, in accommodation to the corruption of human nature, it holds out to its followers and supporters the promise of a sensual paradise.

This religion was propagated with wonderful rapidity by conquest and the sword. The Koran, tribute, or the sword, were the only alternatives held out to opposing nations. Its followers were taught that “a drop of blood shed in the cause of religion, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months spent in fasting and prayer. Whoever falls

* It is supposed that he mistook Παράκλητος, *Comforter*, for Περιλυτός, *very illustrious*.

in battle his sins are forgiven; at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermillion and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied with the wings of angels and cherubim." This delusion overran several countries where Christianity had been established; prostrated the churches, or converted them into mosques; and to this day, in extensive regions of the East, the crescent is triumphant over the cross.

We might well suppose that the rise and progress of an enemy to the Gospel so formidable as this would receive some notice in those prophecies which foretold the fortunes of the Church. Accordingly we find the rise and progress of this grand imposture distinctly foretold, though in symbolical language, in the 9th chapter of the Apocalypse. "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace: and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."

A *star*, in prophetic language, means a Christian Minister,—or Bishop. It cannot be applicable to Mohammed, who had never been a minister of Christ. Some commentators, among whom is Mr. Faber, suppose that the fallen star indicates *Sergius* or *Baheira*, an apostate Nestorian Monk, who assisted Moham-

med in forging his imposture, and preparing the Koran. But we are of opinion that some more distinguished ecclesiastic, or rather ecclesiastical power is intended; and who, more probably than those Bishops under whose fostering care the invocation of saints, the worship of pictures and images, and other idolatrous practices, had been introduced and supported in the Christian Church? Those ecclesiastical governors had fallen from the purity of the faith: and the corruption of the church—an event so disastrous—might be aptly compared to the opening of the mouth of the bottomless pit—or hell itself—from whence proceeded those dark and noxious exhalations which obscured the sun, and infected the air. The idolatrous corruptions of the church had reached an alarming pitch at the commencement of the seventh century, and thus prepared the way for Mohammedanism,—which was emphatically *the scourge of idolatrous Christians*.

Writers upon prophecy have shown, how, in every minute particular, the predictions of the 9th chapter of the Revelations relating to “scorpions with stings in their tails”—the ravages they should commit,—and the length of their continuance, were fulfilled in the history of the *Saracens*, by whom Mohammed effected his triumphs, and spread the dominion of the Koran. They have also shown how those relating to “Euphratean horsemen” were ac-

complished by their successors—the *Turks* or *Othmans*, who, to this day, preserve the ascendancy of the religion of the false prophet in some of the fairest portions of the East, including Palestine itself.*

*“*The locusts had on their heads as it were, crowns like gold: the Arabs have constantly worn turbans; and even boast that they wear, as their common attire, those ornaments which among other people are the peculiar badges of royalty. The locusts had faces as the face of men, and hair as the hair of women: the Arabs, as Pliny testifies, wore their beards, or at least their mustachios, as men; while their hair was flowing or plaited, like that of women. The teeth of the locusts were as the teeth of a lion; an expression frequently used in Scripture to denote great strength: Ps. lviii. 6. The sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle: to represent at once the rapid conquests of the Saracens and their proverbial skill in horsemanship; and they had stings in their tails like scorpions; to signify that they should carry along with them wherever they flew, a loathsome and deadly superstition. The power of the locusts to hurt men was for five months; taking these for prophetic months—a day for a year—the period is 150 years. The Saracens are supposed to have commenced their ravages about A. D. 612, consequently the five prophetic months expired in the year 762, when the Caliph Almansor built Bagdad, as the future seat of his empire, and called it the city of peace. At this period the Saracens ceased from their locust devastations, and became a settled people.*” [Faber on the Prophecies, pp. 289-291.] “*A command was given to Apollyon and his symbolical locusts that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree. Accordingly it was the special injunction of Abubeker to the Saracens, that they destroy no palm trees, nor burn any fields of corn; that they should cut down no fruit trees, nor injure any cattle except such as they killed to eat.*” “The Saracens continued to possess, though they did not extend their dominions, till the Turks supplanted them, and all this time properly belongs to the first *wo trumpet*. The Turks pouring into Persia and the regions bounding on the Euphrates, in the 11th century, established four sultanies or

They were commanded not to hurt those who had “the seal of God in their foreheads:” and accordingly, they were never victorious over any branch of the Church where corruption and idolatry had not established their sway.*

Mohammedanism seems to have been used, in the Providence of God, to inflict chastisement upon cor-

kingdoms in those parts. They were prevented from making further conquests by the Crusades. But when those ruinous projects were finally abandoned, *the four angels*—symbols of the four sultanies—were loosed. Then the Turks, uniting together, began their ravages and victories; and made great havoc among the inhabitants of that part of the world which had constituted the Roman Empire, and which we have often read of as ‘*the third part of men.*’ These powers were prepared for *an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.* This fixed time being computed by a year for each day, according to the prophetic manner, and twelve months of thirty days each being allowed to the year here mentioned, that is 360 prophetic days—or years; thirty more being added for the month, and one for the day, the whole amounts to 391 years and fifteen days. Now the first conquest of the Turks over the Christians took place A. D. 1281: and the last success by which they extended their dominions was A. D. 1672, being exactly 391 years from the one to the other. *The number of the army of horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand, or two hundred millions.* The Turks often brought into the field armies of from four to seven hundred thousand men, chiefly cavalry; when we consider the whole multitude employed during the contest of 391 years, we see the propriety of the Apostle’s strong prophetic language.” Scott’s commentaries on the 9th chapter Revelations, *passim*.

* “When the Saracens approached Savoy, Piedmont, and the southern provinces of France, which had been but little tainted with the general disease, and which were afterwards the seat of the Waldenses and the Albigenses, they were defeated with great slaughter by Charles Martel in several engagements.” FABER.

rupt and idolatrous Christian Churches. Its armies scorched them as with fire : their stroke was like the sting of scorpions ; and by them “a third part of men was killed ;” that is, a third part of the Roman Empire was overrun, and the corrupt Churches of the East were almost entirely exterminated. “But” says the inspired writer—“the rest of the men, which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood ; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.” Notwithstanding these severe scourgings, the worship of images, and saints, and pictures, and the Virgin—so offensive to God, and so hostile to the spirit and precepts of the gospel, still continues to be practised in many parts of Christendom.

The religion of the false prophet has now continued for more than twelve hundred years. Founded in falsehood, it has been sustained chiefly by terror and the sword : but the same book which graphically foretold its rise and progress, has also, under the figure of “the drying up of the Euphrates,” and other metaphors, distinctly announced its decline and overthrow. Even now, according to the representation of recent travellers, it totters to its fall. It is fast losing its hold upon the affections of the rulers as well as the subjects of the Turkish Empire ; its

mosques are crumbling to decay ; and ere long, either by the operation of God's blessing upon ordinary causes, by the movements of Christian governments, or by the direct and marvellous interposition of Divine power, it will,—as we firmly believe—be overthrown, and sunk in the pit whence it emanated.

II. It is a painful and humiliating task to be obliged to say any thing which may be considered dishonorable to our holy religion ; or to dwell upon points which necessarily involve an exposure of the errors, vices, and crimes of the professed friends and supporters of Christianity. But the evangelical narrative has not thrown the veil of oblivion over the diabolical treason of Judas, the guilty equivocation and denials of Peter, or the criminal weakness of the other Apostles. St. Paul, in his epistles, did not hesitate to expose the false doctrines, the wicked schisms, the fierce contentions, the shameful disorders and vices that existed among the Christians at Corinth. So neither is it difficult to perceive in the prophetical parts of Scripture, predictions of the heresies, corruptions, and apostacies that would spring up in the bosom of the Church in the latter days. And as our object is to ascertain what the Scriptures really teach, it is obligatory on us to notice them.

You will bear me witness, brethren, that I am not fond of controversial discussions, and that, when

driven to engage in them, it is not my custom to indulge in language of vituperation and abuse. I may condemn a system of superstition and error, without any breach of charity towards the communities or individuals by whom it is upheld. I may expose the false opinions and corrupt practices of a fellow Christian, but yet reprove him as a friend, and love him as a brother. I can make a distinction between his character and his opinions,—his person and his faults.

You need not be informed that a large number of Protestant commentators believe the Papal Church of Rome to be the “Antichrist” of St. John, the “Man of Sin” of St. Paul, the “Little horn” of Daniel—and the “Babylon, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” of the Revelations. Of the truth or falsity of this interpretation of Scripture it is not necessary that I should express a positive opinion. I would not rashly or harshly condemn any community bearing the Christian name. But, at the same time, I should be unfaithful to the interests of truth, not to utter a note of warning against a system of error, superstition and tyranny—tremendous in its character and wide in its extent,—subtle in its machinations, insidious in its arts, and deadly in its influence,—and against which, as I firmly believe, the Holy Scriptures protest in the most decided terms of condemnation.

Let us examine some of the particulars in this chapter, and other portions of the New Testament, relating to corruptions which were to arise in the Church before the second coming of our Lord.

That the evil of which the Apostle speaks in the chapter before us, under the appellations “man of sin,” “son of perdition,” and “wicked,” is not an enemy that would assail the Church *from without*, is manifest from his speaking of it in connexion with “a falling away” or apostacy, and also, from his representing it as sitting in the “Temple of God”—or Church of Christ. He speaks of “the mystery of iniquity” as already working, in the Church, which would eventually produce that fearful system of delusion to which he referred, when existing restraints should be removed.

What description does the Apostle give of that system of corrupted Christianity which he personified as the “Man of sin?” “He opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth himself in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” Now some would infer from this, that St. Paul speaks of some *professedly Atheistic power*, not only repudiating Christianity, but taking the attitude of avowed hostility to the true God, and setting himself up in his stead, as the only proper object of worship. But this would be a forced and constrained interpre-

tation of the passage; for the “Wicked” of whom the Apostle speaks, *sitteth in the Temple of God*, that is, as we think—remains in the Christian Church: Whereas a system of avowed Atheism, or of idolatry, would not only be without the Christian Church, but in open and *professed* hostility to it. The title “Gods” is sometimes given in Scripture to magistrates and earthly sovereigns; and the Apostle here describes the rise of some formidable *despotism* which, under the Christian name, would claim superiority to all earthly powers—asserting prerogatives, and claiming homage and obedience, which rightfully belong to God only.

Now, it is an unquestionable historical fact that the Bishop of Rome, originally on a par with other Bishops, gradually usurped powers and prerogatives inconsistent with the equality which Christ ordained among the highest order of his ministers; till about the same time, if not in the very year, that Mohammed publicly proclaimed himself to be a Prophet, he received from the Emperor Phocas, and appropriated to himself, the title of *Universal Bishop*.*

When the power that “let,” or hindered, supposed to have been the Roman Empire, was divided, or “taken out of the way,” then this terrific despotism

*“I confidently affirm,” says Gregory 1st. Bishop of Rome, “that whoso calls himself Universal Bishop, is *a forerunner of Antichrist*. It is too proud for a Christian: it belongs to him who fell through pride.”

was more fully “revealed.” The Pope claimed, as of divine right, many honors and powers that had been conceded to him merely on the ground of courtesy as Bishop of the capital of the empire. He converted other Bishops, who by divine institution were his equals, into menials and vassals,—subject to his dictates, amenable to his authority, and exercising their spiritual prerogatives only by his grace and favour. Even to this day, and in this country, the prelates of that schism, instead of being Bishops of an independent branch of the Church Catholic, are but the Vicars and servants of the Bishop of Rome. Thus exalting himself in the Temple of God, he placed himself at the head of all ecclesiastical authority and power, and, as professed Vicar of Christ on earth, impiously assuming infallibility, he exercised prerogatives and received homage which rightfully belong to Christ only. Swaggering like Jupiter upon the top of Olympus, he fulminated his thunders, inflicted the pains of excommunication, and delivered over to perdition, all Bishops and Churches who protested against his usurpations, or refused to comply with his mandates.

But this was not all. The bearer of the triple crown at length claimed jurisdiction over earthly sovereigns. He deposed Kings and Princes, released subjects from their allegiance,—dispensed with the obligation of oaths,—and claimed abject obedience

and submission from all principalities and powers, whether in Church or State. Was not this “sitting in the ‘Temple of God,’” and showing himself as if he were God, in receiving the homage of a subjugated world prostrate at his feet?*

* It is well known that after the destruction of the western branch of the imperial power—which “let” or hindered the revelation of the man of sin, the Bishop of Rome assumed the Pagan title of *Pontifex Maximus*, which had before been used by the Emperors from the days of Augustus Cæsar. The Popes also have received at their inauguration or coronation—the divine titles of “Rector orbis”—*Ruler of the world*. “Sanctissimus et beatissimus Pater”—*most holy and most blessed Father*. “SANCTISSIMUS DOMINUS”—*Most holy Lord*. The Rev. J. Gordon, a regular bred Jesuit, in a work published in 1723, giving “an historical account of the present state of Rome, the election of the late Pope Clement XI, the proceedings of the Jesuits in China, and also in England and other Protestant countries”—says in his account of the election of Cardinal *Albani* (Clement XI) “he was declared vicar of Christ, and adored as such by the Cardinals, who, when they kiss his toe, say, according to the laudable phrase of the council of *Lateran* (DOMINUS DEUS NOSTER PAPA.) ‘Thou art God on earth, and as God I adore thee, &c.’ which is the first act of recognizance.” Mr. Lawrence Banck, in his account of the inauguration of Pope Innocent X, of which he was an eye and ear witness, says ‘the Prince and Cardinal *Mediceus*, Deacon *a dextris*, placed on his’ (the Pope’s) head the Tiara called *Regnum*, adorned with a triple crown, with these words—‘*Accipe Tiaram tribus Coronis ornatam ; et scias te esse patrem Principum et Regnum : RECTOREM ORBIS : In terra Vicarium salvatoris nostris Jesu Christi, cui sit honor et gloria in secula seculorum—Amen*. Receive the Tiara adorned with three crowns, and know that then thou art Father of Princes and Kings, RULER OF THE WORLD, in earth Vicar of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to whom be honor and glory forever and ever—Amen ! These are clear proofs that the Pope is called not only ‘Ruler of the world’ but even ‘*Dominus Deus Noster Papa*’—THE LORD OUR GOD

We speak not of individual Popes. Good men may have borne the office at times—though, alas ! many of them were of a very different character ! but we refer to that gigantic system of ANTICHRISTIAN DESPOTISM under whose fostering care the invocation of saints, the veneration of images, the fable of purgatory, the monstrous figment of transubstantiation,—and the idolatrous worship of the host and the Virgin, with all their correlative corruptions and abominations—have been employed to quench the spirit and crush out the vitals of Christianity.

The Apostle further informs us, that the progress of the man of sin “is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.” Does not this language remind us of the gross frauds, impositions, and necromancy, which, under the name of miracles, have been used, without scruple, to sustain the power of the Papacy and keep the ignorant in vassalage to that degrading system ?

There are other passages of Scripture which refer to this “falling away” from the faith and purity of the Gospel as following “the doctrines and commandments of men,” encouraging the ‘worship of angels,’ and will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body.”* “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly

THE POPE!!!! Horrible blasphemy ! Vide. Granville Sharp’s inquiry whether the Babylon described in Rev. xviii, means Rome as a city ? p. 50. App. 14-15.

*Coloss. ii. 23.

that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, forbidding to marry, and abstaining from meats.”* We need not remind you how these marks of the apostacy have been exhibited in the withholding of the Scriptures from the people,—in the forced celibacy of the Clergy, and of the Monks, and of the Nuns,—and in the supposed meritorious fastings, penances, and mortifications on which such multitudes rely for salvation, instead of building their hopes upon the merits of Christ alone, and submitting to the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit.

Nor is it necessary to remind you what a comment is afforded by the sanguinary records of the *Inquisition* in Spain and Portugal and Goa,—by the horrible *massacre of St. Bartholomew’s day* in France, and the *flames of Smithfield* in England,—(all in different countries, and at different periods, yet under the guidance of the same terrible power,)—upon that fearful passage in the Apocalypse which speaks of her who was “drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”

It affords us no pleasure to speak of these things. We would gladly pass over them were it possible to do so consistently with our avowed purpose to notice the leading events mentioned in the prophecies of the New Testament as antecedents of the second

* 1. Tim. iv. 1-3.

coming of our Lord. For although the advocates of the corrupt system of Christianity alluded to denounce all the ministers and members of the Reformed Churches,—together with those of the Greek and other Oriental Churches,—(comprising about three-fifths of the Holy Catholic Church,)—as heretics, and consign us over to perdition,—we would not recriminate or return railing for railing. On the contrary, we would give blessings for a curse,—and pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us.

We are far from asserting that the Church of Rome is *the* Antichrist, to the exclusion of other systems of delusion more erroneous and wicked. For we consider this as a *generic term*, including all systems of error and wickedness opposed to the will and the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We acknowledge her to be a part, but a corrupt part of the Church of Christ. We believe that she has had, and still has, many devout and pious souls in her communion who, through grace, maintain the life of godliness in spite of the disadvantages of their position. So far as she retains what is *truly Catholic* in her creeds, worship and ministry, we commend her. It is only so far as she is Papal and corrupt that we condemn her. We bless God that our branch of the Church Universal is liberated from the galling, unscriptural yoke of a foreign Prince and Prelate, and has reformed away the false doctrines, idola-

trous rites, and superstitious fooleries that once deformed her. We should rejoice to see the Romish Church following her example by returning to the truly Catholic standard of primitive times. But we fear this is too much to hope for. For, however much she may be modified and restrained by circumstances, when struggling for existence and growth amidst the evangelical light and free institutions of a Protestant country,—the errors which need reform are so deeply grafted into her system as to be essential to her existence; and although, from time to time, ‘God’s people may come out from her, that they be not partakers of her plagues,’—yet her proud claim to infallibility and unchangeableness is an effectual bar to her reformation. If not reformed, we believe she is destined to be overthrown. We may have mistaken the meaning of prophecy; and if so, we pray God to forgive it as a mistake of ignorance, not of wilfulness. But if we are not mistaken, this spiritual Babylon, which has so long been exulting in her pride and luxury, her wealth and power, must fall. Her doom is written by the pen of inspiration. ‘The Lord will consume her by the spirit of his mouth, and destroy her with the brightness of his coming!’

While meditating upon these awful themes of prophecy, we should not only watch against the indulgence of an uncharitable proscriptive spirit, and be

careful to love the persons of men even in condemning their errors;—but we should also carefully guard against the insidious influence of a proud self-complacent feeling, as if we were the exclusive favorites of heaven, and the Protestant world, of which we form a part, were free from all that is offensive in the sight of God. There are other systems, as those of Infidelity and Atheism, for example, which are far more odious and pernicious than any forms of superstition and error which have yet passed under our review. In the factions, schisms, and heresies—in the contempt of authority, the resistance of law, the spirit of rebuke and blasphemy, which mark these “last days,”—we may find existing evils, no less distinctly predicted in prophecy—no less anti-christian in their character, than the corruptions of Popery, or the abominations of the Arabian imposture.

It was our design to have finished this branch of the subject on the present occasion; but so much time has been occupied already, that it must be deferred till the next Sunday evening.

And now, friends and brethren,—what shall we say to you in conclusion? Is it enough that we call your attention to the prominent evils which the prophetic spirit foretold? Is it enough that we enable you to perceive a fulfilment of God’s word in the monstrous antichristian systems which have established their baleful power on earth, and are to be

destroyed at the coming of our Lord? Wo be to us if we make the study of prophecy a matter of speculation, and attend to it merely to gratify our curiosity! We should make it a matter of deep personal concern, having a direct bearing upon our spiritual welfare and our everlasting destiny. When Jesus shall come again, it will be to deal not only with nations and communities, but with individuals also. ‘We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and every one of us give an account of himself to God.’ He will not only overthrow false systems,—but sentence all impenitent sinners to everlasting destruction from his presence, and from the glory of his power.

In the great contest between light and darkness—holiness and corruption—God and Antichrist—every individual of our race is actively engaged on the one side or on the other. Which cause have *we* espoused? On which side are we doing battle? If, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we are fighting under his banner against sin, the world and the devil—when the Lord cometh, we shall receive a crown of life. But if we remain worldly, careless, impenitent, and unconverted, we shall be numbered amongst his enemies, and have our portion with the workers of iniquity.

May we all ‘give diligence to make our calling and election sure!’ May ‘our loins be girded about,

—our lamps trimmed and burning,—and we ourselves like those who wait for the coming of their Lord!’ For behold, He cometh—and blessed are they who shall be prepared for his coming!

LECTURE FOURTH.

HERESY, SCHISM, INFIDELITY, AND OTHER ANTI-CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES.

2. TIMOTHY, CHAPTER, III. VERSE 1.

“ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”

IN prosecuting our inquiry as to the leading events depicted in the prophetical parts of the New Testament as antecedent to the second coming of our Lord, we have presented some reflections in reference to the rise, progress, and desolating influence of the great Arabian Imposture—which, by the power of the sword, spread the dominion of the Koran over extensive regions of the East, and proved a terrible scourge to those Christian Churches which had been corrupted by false doctrines and idolatrous usages. We also attempted to show that the same prophecies which, in such graphic but metaphorical language describe the desolating march of the anti-

christian system that planted the triumphant crescent upon the minarets of Constantinople, and, with sacrilegious feet, trampled the Holy city itself in the dust,—foretell its overthrow. It already totters to its fall, and is doomed to final destruction by the righteous judgment of God.

The chief object, however, of our last lecture, was to ascertain the meaning of St. Paul, in the second chapter of his second epistle to the Thessalonians, where he speaks of “a falling away” or apostacy in the Christian Church which would result in “the revelation of the man of sin—the son of perdition—who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or is worshipped, and sitteth himself in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” We came to the conclusion that the evil system here personified could not be an openly Atheistic, or an avowedly idolatrous one; because it is described as seated in the Temple of God—or the Christian Church. It is a great spiritual despotism, nominally Christian: and what can that be but *Papal Rome*? We reminded you of the important historical fact that, about the same time that Mohammed assumed the prophetic character, the Bishop of Rome received and appropriated to himself the title of Universal Bishop. Ever since, he has treated other Bishops, who by divine appointment are of equal rank with himself, as dependants on his will;

so that, to this day, the prelates of the Roman obedience, instead of being Bishops of independent branches of the Catholic Church of Christ—are, even in this free land, dependant for their Jurisdiction upon a foreign Prince, and in abject vassalage to the Pope of Rome. He arrogates to himself infallibility and universal power in ecclesiastical matters; thus receiving the homage and claiming the prerogatives which belong to our Lord Jesus Christ—the only Head of the Church universal. Not content with this, he also, in process of time, set himself above all that are ‘called Gods’—as earthly magistrates and rulers. He deposed sovereigns,* released subjects from their allegiance, discharged them from the obligations of oaths,—and not only dispensed pardon,

* That this power of the pope, to depose sovereigns at his pleasure, was often claimed and exercised, history fully attests :—and that all who did not firmly and inviolably believe it as an article of faith were declared excommunicate, is manifest from a Bull of *Pope Boniface the eighth*, an extract from which we now give. “*Infallibili auctoritate, nobis a Spiritu Sancto divinitus communicata, omnes et singulos utriusque sexus excommunicatos declaramus qui non firmiter ac inviolabiliter crediderint NOSTRAM AUCTORITATEM SUPER OMNES PRINCIPES TERRÆ, in iis excommunicandis, ET AD LIBITUM DEPONENDIS,*” &c. By the infallible authority, divinely imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, we declare all and each of both sexes excommunicated who do not firmly and inviolably believe OUR AUTHORITY OVER ALL PRINCES OF THE EARTH, in excommunicating and DEPOSING THEM AT PLEASURE, &c.

The reader of history will be at no loss in calling to memory many facts illustrative of the other allegations contained in the paragraph to which this note is appended.

but even sold indulgences for sin. Thus having all ecclesiastical and civil dominions in subjection at his feet, exercising powers and claiming prerogatives which rightfully belong to Christ only, and receiving adoration and titles which cannot without blasphemy be applied to any but the supreme God,—is he not truly characterised as ‘seated in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God?’

Other prophecies of the New Testament, to which we adverted, describe other features of this great corruption of Christianity. They speak of the false doctrines, the superstitious usages, the idolatrous rites, the wicked oppressions, the bloody persecutions with which the Church of God has been afflicted under the sway of this gigantic and fearful tyranny.

It is a mournful task to the pious mind to be obliged to dwell upon such perversions and abuses of our holy religion. But what the tongue of prophecy predicted the faithful pen of history has recorded. And while fidelity to the truth compels us to expose the errors of our fellow Christians, we should do it, not in the spirit of bitterness and invective, but in that of meekness and love. We should distinguish between the faults of a system and the characters and the persons of the individuals by whom it is ignorantly upheld. We should pray that they may be reclaimed to the purity of a truly Catholic system, and fervently desire the arrival of that day when all who “call themselves Christians may hold the faith in

unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.”

We now invite you to the contemplation of other times and scenes, widely different from those which have already passed under our review. “*This know that in THE LAST DAYS perilous times shall come.*”

In speaking of important events to take place under the dispensation of the Messiah, the inspired writers refer to different periods, under the phrases “latter times,” and “last times;”—the one in the comparative, the other in the superlative degree. In the Old Testament, where both phrases are translations of the same words in the original Hebrew,—it is enough that we consider them as applicable to the times of the Christian dispensation at large: although in some of the prophecies they are used with a more definite and specific application, as we shall have occasion to show hereafter.

But in the New Testament they are translations of two different phrases in the original Greek, and always, as we believe, designate two different and distinct periods in the history of the Christian Church. By “latter times”* the *period of superstition and spiritual despotism* is intended: on the other hand, by “the last days”† the *period of infidelity, heresy, and confusion* is intended.

* υστεροι καιροι.

† εσχαται ημεραι.

The characteristic traits of the former period have been sufficiently noticed, and we now pass on to give a hasty sketch of the greater abominations, and the more deadly evils which the pen of inspiration ascribes to the latter.

Before, however, we open that gloomy page of prophecy—it is proper that our minds should have a little respite from the painful and humiliating feelings which our last theme has awakened,—by looking upon that illuminated and lovely scene which, in the chart of prophecy, occupies an intervening space, between the dark domain of superstition, on the one hand,—and the still darker territory of infidelity, heresy, and confusion, on the other.

In the most ignorant and corrupt ages of the Church there were some “faithful among the faithless found.” Even amidst that gloomy night of superstition called “the dark ages” there were some who watched the vestal lamp which God had lighted in his Church, and prevented the light of truth and the fires of devotion from being utterly extinguished. The Waldenses and the Albigenses who, under the persecutions of Rome and protesting against its corruption,—maintained the purity of Christian faith and practice,—were in spiritual fellowship with hundreds and thousands of God’s secret ones who, though in the bosom of that Church and mourning over its antichristian errors and tyranny, yet main-

tained communion with the Saviour, and walked before God in faith, and holiness, and love. They were like brilliant stars which here and there dart their rays through the interstices of a clouded sky. These faithful ones, represented under the figure of "the woman" or Church "in the wilderness," are supposed by Faber, Scott, and others to be referred to in the fourteenth chapter of the Apocalypse where St. John describes a vision of "the Lamb upon Mount Zion," a figure of the Church, "surrounded by one hundred and forty-four thousand who had not received the mark of the beast, but having the Father's name written upon their foreheads." He heard them harping with their harps, and singing a new song before the throne. "These were they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without spot before the throne of God."*

The prayers, and groans, and songs of those followers of the Lamb, who remained faithful to the cause of truth and holiness amidst the night of superstition, were not in vain. Those stars, shining in a dark firmament, proved the harbingers of a brighter day which soon dawned and poured its lustre upon the world. "I saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven,

* Rev. xiv. 1-5.

having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.” “And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.”*

The proclamations of these three successive angels are represented in the vision as preparing the way for the coming of the Son of Man, who is represented as seated upon a cloud, having a sickle in his hand with which he reaps the harvest of the world. Then follows a figurative representation of those desolating judgments of God upon antichristian powers, and those exaltations and triumphs of the Church which are to accompany and follow the second advent of our Lord.

* Rev. xiv. 6-13.

Some expositors of the prophecies suppose that by these three angels are intended the leading Reformers;—others consider them as symbols of the reformed Churches in different countries, bearing different testimony against the errors of a corrupt and tyrannical superstition; and others again, think they are designed to represent the original work of the Reformers in waking up a slumbering Church—the subsequent work of Bible Societies in the universal circulation of the Holy Scriptures—and the work of Missionary Societies in causing the Gospel to be preached throughout the world.

But it is sufficient for our understanding of the subject,—without entering into such minute applications,—to consider the proclamations of the three different angels as representing the various *ends* which God designs to accomplish by means of the glorious Reformation.

The Reformation was not the setting up of a new Church on earth, or the publication of a new religion. Such is the representation given of it by its enemies. But it was, in fact, merely a restoration of the Church to its primitive purity, and the release of the truth from the manacles and fetters of error which a corrupt superstition had fastened upon her.

That this part of the Apocalyptic visions refers to the period of the Reformation is manifest from the words “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord,

from henceforth.” This is not simply a declaration of the truth that those who die in the Lord are blessed or happy. That was always true from the beginning of time. The words *from henceforth* give the passage a more definite application. The meaning is, that whereas under the dark reign of error and superstition men dreaded the fires of purgatory, and were taught to believe that the most pious members of the Church must suffer for many years or ages after death, before entering into a state of happiness; yet, from the time of the Reformation, when the gospel should be preached again in its purity, men’s minds would be relieved from this dread, and it would be known, as a precious truth, that all who died in the Lord would be immediately blessed.

Another end of the Reformation would be to expose the errors, superstitions, idolatry, and tyranny that had so long ruled in the Church and kept the minds of men in the bondage of ignorance and sin;—to call upon God’s people to come out of the spiritual Babylon that they partake not of her plagues;—and to bear faithful testimony to God’s judgments against her and all who bear “the mark of the Beast.”

But the most glorious effect of this remarkable work of God is the diffusion of light and purity throughout an ignorant and corrupted world. This end is pictured under the figure of “an angel flying

through the midst of heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people." Before the extraordinary event here described,—the word of God, so far as the people were concerned, was a sealed book : the few copies in existence were confined to the priesthood, and written in a tongue not understood by the people. They drank only the turbid streams of tradition, but had no access to the unadulterated fountain of Divine truth. The Reformers translated the Scriptures into the vernacular languages—while, about the same time, the revival of letters, and the discovery of the art of printing facilitated their evangelical labors, and were the instruments, furnished in the good Providence of God, of securing the extension and perpetuity of their work. Had the Reformation accomplished no more than this—had it done no more than to translate the Scriptures into the living tongues of the principal nations of Europe, it would have been difficult to compute the magnitude of the benefits thus conferred upon mankind. But, as contemporaneous with this, there was a revival of the work of preaching. The obsolete and almost exploded doctrine of justification by faith, which is, emphatically, the distinguishing doctrine of the New Testament, was restored to the rank it occupied in the teaching of the Apostles. The zeal of primitive times seemed

to be again rekindled upon earth. ‘The Lord gave the word,—and a great company went forth’ preaching the Gospel of his grace amidst the effusions of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The good work has continued to spread—till, through God’s blessing upon the labours of Bible Societies, the Holy Scriptures are translated into a majority of the languages of the nations—so that we may now say, almost without hyperbole, ‘All people may read in their own tongues the wonderful works of God.’

The same Apostolic zeal which has multiplied and is multiplying copies of the Scriptures, and is circulating them to an almost incredible amount,—is also sending forth the living expounders of that word to proclaim among the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ. We live in times when it may be truly said “many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased.” Within the last half century efforts have been made to spread the Gospel far and wide unexampled since the earliest age of our holy religion. The Church already has her missionaries on every Continent, and on almost every Island. This good work is destined to go forward, and to be continued, perhaps with augmented energy and power, through all the conflicts and wars,—the corruptions and blasphemies,—the violence and wickedness of “the last days.” It will go forward, bearing faithful testimony to Christ and his truth—amidst the rage and

opposition of antichristian powers, till the Gospel has been preached “for a witness to all nations.” Then cometh the end—when the Lord shall destroy the wicked with the breath of his mouth, and consume them with the brightness of his coming. The work of propagating the Gospel will go forward till the cry is made ‘Babylon is fallen!—Babylon is fallen! the beast and the false prophet are cast into the bottomless pit.’ That cry is but the first note of victory. It will speedily be followed by a louder shout—which will sound from heaven, and be echoed on earth—‘HALLELUJAH! FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH: THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST, AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER!’

The course of remarks in which we have now indulged in reference to the nature and effects of one of the most memorable events recorded in the annals of the Church, cannot properly be considered a digression from our main subject—for it is an event that will exert an important influence in preparing the way for the coming and kingdom of our Lord. But it is time that we proceed to the particular theme suggested by the text—an inquiry as to the evils depicted in the prophecies of the New Testament as *characteristic of the LAST DAYS*.

We first briefly advert to those which relate to

“the *latter times*” or reign of superstition in the Church. “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the *latter times* some shall depart from the faith”—*apostatize*; (It is the same mode of expression which the Apostle uses to describe “the falling away” from the purity of Christian faith and practice which preceded the revelation of “the man of sin,”) “giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils:” more properly of *demons or mediating spirits*. Bishop Newton justly remarks that “this is a prophecy that the idolatrous theology of demons professed by the Heathen, should be revived among Christians.” It has been fulfilled in the use of the mediation of saints, and of angels, and of the Virgin, to the neglect and dishonor of Jesus Christ—the only Mediator between God and man. “Forbidding to marry, abstaining from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”*

“The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues,” (that is, the members of idolatrous Churches not subdued by the Mohammedan conquests,) “yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, or idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries,

* 1 Tim. iv. 1-3.

nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts.”* “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head;——Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men? which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.”† “Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.”‡ These predictions, as we believe, all refer to the period called “the latter times” and have received a literal fulfilment in the fond inventions, superstitious usages, idolatrous practices, and false miracles of Papal Rome.

How different in their character are the predictions which relate to “the last days?” Let us look at some of the most remarkable of them. “This know also, that in *the last days* perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,—without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,—traitors,

* Rev. ix. 20-21.

† Col. ii. 18-23.

‡ 2. Thess. ii. 9.

heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts; ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.”* “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”† “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ — Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Wo unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These be they which separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”‡ “As ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many

* 2 Tim. iii. 1-8.

† 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

‡ Jude, 4, 8, 11, 19.

Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God, and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come.”*

“But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” “There shall come *in the last days* scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying where is the promise of his coming?”† “There shall be mockers in the last time.”‡

What a tremendous array of evils—what a loathsome catalogue of antichristian systems and influences is here presented to our view as characteristic of the LAST DAYS of the latter times!—the days that will immediately precede the glorious appearing and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ! How widely different is this from that vision of the triumph of truth and righteousness—the universal dif-

* 1 John ii. 18, 22, 23; iv. 3. † 2 Pet. ii. 1-2; iii. 3-4. ‡ Jude 18.

fusion of peace and holiness for a thousand years before the second advent—upon which so many in our day are accustomed to dwell with pleasure !

It is impracticable and unnecessary for us to dwell minutely upon all the shocking and odious features of the last days—as exhibited in the passages which have now been quoted and other parallel portions of the sacred volume. As the result of a careful examination, we present the following faithful *analysis* of them. The great leading evils of the last days will be *schisms, heresies, lawless violence, disorder and crime*—sustained by all the blasphemies and abominations of *atheism and infidelity*. These prominent features we will now briefly notice in their order.

I. SCHISMS. “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but *will heap to themselves teachers*, having itching ears ! They will follow in the way of Balaam and perish in the gainsaying of *Core*,” or Korah.* “These are they which *separate themselves* ; sensual having not the Spirit.”

It is an established principle, confirmed by all experience, that the greatest blessings are often, through the wickedness of men, perverted into instruments of the greatest evil. Thus the Gospel of life and salvation itself, through their abuse of it,

* Numbers, xvi.

proves to multitudes “the savour of death unto death.” Highly as we prize the glorious Reformation,—the instrument of unspeakable benefits to the Church and to the world,—we freely admit that that great moral revolution which released the human mind from the thralldom of ignorance and superstition in which it had been held for ages, proved, through the influence of human corruption, the innocent occasion of some fearful evils recorded in the subsequent history of the world. Some were found who turned the grace of God into licentiousness and abused the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free.

The leading Reformers had no intention of establishing a new Church: they simply aimed at purifying the old. Their design was to sweep away what was the work of human wickedness and corruption, and to leave what was divine, untouched, in all its primitive beauty and integrity.

So far as our branch of the Christian Church is concerned, by the good favour and providence of God, this design was rigidly adhered to, and carried into full effect. The Reformation in our mother Church was begun, carried on, and completed, *by the Bishops*, to whom Christ had entrusted, as chief shepherds, the instruction and government of his flock. The ministry, as originally instituted by divine authority, was retained in its three orders. The Liturgy was purified in conformity to the light of

Scripture, and by the aid of ancient authors. The Bible was re-established as the only infallible rule of faith—and in doctrine, worship, and discipline, the only model was the Holy Catholic Church of Christ, in her purest and best days, before the corruptions of Popery prevailed.

But in some other branches of the Reformation there was, unhappily, a departure from the divinely instituted ministry and government of the Church; and subsequently the work of schism and separation has become so common that its sinfulness is almost entirely overlooked. The most trifling causes have been deemed a sufficient justification for rending the body of Christ. Some have come to the conclusion that religion is left entirely to human regulation: that men have as much right to “heap to themselves teachers” and appoint men to act as ministers of God, as they have to elect civil magistrates, or to appoint agents and servants in their secular business; that they may as lawfully institute Churches as organize political cliques or literary clubs. Separatists from the Church are divided and subdivided, like the polypus, without affecting the integrity of the infinitesimal divisions. Their name is *Legion*; and it is a difficult task even to enumerate their titles, much more to designate the various shades of belief and practice by which they are distinguished. The heterogeneous spectacle exhibited by the sectarians,

who have cut themselves off from the Church, calls forth the scorn of the enemies of religion, and should awaken shame and humiliation in the bosom of its friends.

We speak not of the motives which have led to separation. We judge not the character of those who are thus separated. No doubt among the various sects of modern times many of the Lord's secret and chosen ones are to be found. We know not to what extent God's providence may permit the work of separation to proceed: nor do we doubt that, in common with other follies and vices of men, it will be overruled for good. Here, as before, we can discriminate between the faults of systems and the character and condition of those by whom they are ignorantly upheld. We admit that many, as the result of education and prejudice, may involuntarily be in a state of schism without being chargeable with its guilt, because not animated by a schismatical spirit. And we can sincerely wish "grace, mercy, and peace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," whatever name they may be called by, and to whatever denomination they may belong. But we should be unfaithful to our trust if we failed to speak of the *work of separation* as a work of the flesh, not of the spirit. Schism is one of the evil features of "the last days." It is opposed to the will and derogatory to the glory of our Lord Jesus

Christ. His will is that there "should be no schism in the body." And all who desire the display of his glory should pray for the coming of that time when "there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd."*

II. HERESIES constitute the next prominent point in our analysis of the evils which characterize "the last days."

"They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." "They shall privily bring in damnable heresies; even denying the Lord that bought them;" "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." "He is anti-christ that denieth the Father and the Son. Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come."

Heresies may be considered as the fruitful progeny

*The author has spoken on this point with plainness, but, he hopes, not without charity. It is a point often referred to by the inspired writers, but alas! too lightly regarded by many Christians. Nothing can justify separation from the Church but the imposition of unlawful terms of communion. Many are now in that state, who, if they were in the Church, would not deem themselves justified in cutting themselves off from her communion; because they do not believe her doctrines to be heretical or her ministry unauthorised. If then, there be no evil in the Church system which would render it their duty to depart from her communion if they were now in it: can there be anything to justify their *remaining in a state of separation* because it has descended to them as an unhappy inheritance from their fathers?

of schism. The one sin is parent to the other. When men depart from the apostolic ministry and fellowship, they too commonly bid adieu to "the faith once delivered to the saints." Having broken through old established land-marks and laid aside the time-honored creeds of primitive days, they are liable to be "driven about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." This truth might be illustrated by reference to *facts* from the early history of Socinianism, about the period of the Reformation, down to the Campbellites, and Ranters, and Mormons of our own times.

All false doctrines may be expected to spring up under the fostering care of schism. But there is one leading feature of heresy designated by the prophecies quoted as especially marking "the last days." I mean *a denial of the Divinity and Atonement of our Lord*. This is sufficiently pointed out by St. John as a 'denying that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh:' that is—a denial that he had any existence prior to his incarnation, so that it could with truth be said that He "came in the flesh" to redeem and save. "Who is antichrist but he that denieth the Father and Son?" Here the Apostle speaks not of Atheism—or a denial of the existence of the Divine Being, but a denial of the personality of the Father and the Son, or of the *relation of paternity and*

filiation in the *Godhead*. The false teachers of this heresy are unequivocally described by St. Peter as "*denying the Lord who bought them.*" This heresy has, within the last fifty years, broken out with fearful boldness and power. It has laid its death-spell upon the reformed communities in Germany, France and Geneva,—while the Presbyterian Churches in England and Scotland, and the independent societies planted by the orthodox pilgrims of New England have not escaped its withering influence. We behold it, in one region, arrayed in the cold drapery of philosophy, sustained and propagated by talent, literature, and science of the highest order; and in another, closely allied to ignorance, and pushed forward with all the ardor of fanaticism. It is said that the blinded advocates of this delusion shall "wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Accordingly this heresy has grown from the mild Arianism and semi-Arianism of an early period,—to the grosser error of Socinianism: and not content with that as a stopping place, it has proceeded to its fuller development in the *Neology* and *Humanitarianism* of the present period—which speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ as an erring and peccable man—denies the inspiration of the Scriptures—and pours contempt upon the miracles by which our Holy Religion was attested. This nominally Christian system—whose creed consists of un-

belief—is nearly allied—in its spirit and influence, with that avowed infidelity and open contempt of things sacred and divine to which it ultimately leads, and which is described as its antichristian companion and associate amidst the evils of “the last days.”

III. The concluding division in our analysis of the evils of “the last days”—is INFIDELITY and ATHEISM—accompanied with their necessary fruits *lawless violence, disorder, and crime*. “In the last days there shall be scoffers, walking after their own lusts and saying—Where is the promise of his coming?” “There shall be mockers in the last time, walking after their own ungodly lusts—denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” “In the last days perilous times shall come.”

The spirit of Infidelity has always existed upon earth,—speaking great swelling words and uttering blasphemies against the Most High,—from the days of Cain, the first unbeliever, to the present time. But the Scriptures lead us to believe that, in the last days, it will come out of its hiding places, throw off its cloak, and, as the last and worst form of Antichrist, openly assault the principles of our faith, and make war against God and the Lamb. Within the last half century we have seen the inhabitants of the most refined and polished city of Europe transformed by its influence into brutes and demons. Led on by their philosophers and Savans, they abolished the

Sabbath—voted in solemn assembly that there was no God, set up a prostitute as the goddess of their idolatry—put upon the gateway of the cemetery the inscription “Death is an eternal sleep;” and, as if to exemplify the doctrine of devils by an imitation of their cruelty,—they whelmed the altar and the throne in a common ruin, poured forth rivers of blood at the foot of the guillotine, and permitted neither beauty, nor innocence, nor virtue to afford any protection against a slaughter that would have disgraced the butchery of the sty!

There are some here old enough to remember the events of that reign of terror—the appalling fruits of that brief dominion of Atheism unrestrained. Men stood aghast as they heard the sounds and felt the heavings of that moral earthquake. It was as if some mighty volcanic mountain had burst, and poured its desolating streams of burning lava over all civilized countries of the earth.

Ever since the first French Revolution the spirit of Infidelity and Atheism has been rife in the world. It has descended from the chair of the Philosopher to the cottage of the Peasant, to the loom of the crowded manufactory, and to the work-bench of the Mechanic. It breathes its pestilence in the strains of Poesy,—whispers its scepticism in our books of Science,—infuses its poison into our popular literature,—and scatters the seeds of corruption and death

by the busy and ever active machinery of the periodical press. We no longer look at it in merely isolated and individual examples, but behold it combining its energies, and putting forth its aggregate power to delude and curse mankind in the societies and clubs of Socialists, Chartists, and Agrarians, both in the old world, and in the new.

Do you ask what are its practical fruits? Behold them in the sundering of the nuptial tie—the trampling upon all natural affections and relationships—the disruption of all the sacred links which bind society together! Behold them in the multiplied breaches of contracts and trusts; in the acts of forgery, and theft, and fraud,—in the midnight assassinations, and brutal murders, which are becoming so common that they almost cease to shock us: Behold them in the mobs, and riots, and outbreaks of popular violence—which show an impatience of restraint, and a reckless contempt of the laws, both of God and man.

Would it be possible for the pen of history, in recording the fearful iniquities of this guilty and hardened generation, to give a more faithful portraiture than the pen of prophecy has done in this chapter, in predicting the evils of “the last days?”

O! what would be the condition of this sinful world if the pure light and restraining influence of the Gospel of Christ were to be withdrawn from it?

But “when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.” That standard still floats in the van of the sacramental host. Soon victory will be seen perching upon it. In the contemplation of themes, such as have now demanded our attention, and in the midst of antichristian influences so powerfully working around us, we may be tempted despondingly to ask—Lord, how long? how long shall the ungodly triumph? We know not how long these opposing evils may exist, nor to what fierceness and power they may grow. ‘Satan may come down in yet greater wrath, knowing that his time is short.’ There may be yet more formidable revelations of Antichrist than any of which we have spoken. But of the issue there can be no doubt. The way of the Lord is preparing. His Gospel is being preached for a witness to all nations. He is taking from among the Gentiles a people prepared for his name. Soon he will ‘send forth his angels to gather his elect from the four quarters of the earth: from the one part under heaven to the other.’ The world is rapidly ripening for the harvest. The wheat for the harvest of mercy, the tares for the harvest of wrath. Soon the command will be given—“Thrust in the sickle and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” “What though the Heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? the kings of the earth stand

up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed? He that sitteth in the heavens, shall laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them in derision." "I will tread them in my wrath, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall stain all my raiment: for the day of vengeance is in my heart, and *the year of my redeemed is come.*"* Yes, the year of his redeemed will have come! The Jews shall be brought in, together with the fulness of the Gentiles: and the Lord shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth!

To these glorious events, connected with the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds, we shall next direct our attention. O! let us meditate upon these things, and pray over them. Amidst all the darkness, and sorrows, and conflicts that now surround us, let us be "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God our Saviour Jesus Christ," to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, one living and true God, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

* Isaiah, lxiii. 3-4.

LECTURE FIFTH.

JUDGMENTS UPON GUILTY NATIONS:

THE CONVERSION AND RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

ISAIAH, CHAPTER LIX. VERSES 17—20.

“For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay; fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the Islands he will repay recompense. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.”

It is generally admitted that some parts of the prophecies have been fulfilled,—that others are now in a course of fulfilment, while others are to be fulfilled at some future time. It is of the highest importance in the interpretation of Scripture to discriminate between these different classes of prophecies.

In supporting the doctrine advocated in the present course of Lectures, we wish to be considered as occupying the station of an inquirer for the truth, rather than as pledged champions of any human theory. Our desire is to ascertain, so far as may be permitted to our weakness, what is the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures in reference to those momentous themes to which we have presumed to invite your attention.

While we hold it to be a sound principle that any doctrine is true which is clearly and unequivocally taught even in one passage of Scripture,—yet we would not build a theory upon that one passage inconsistent with other portions of the Sacred Volume. Far less would we adduce in support of the views now advocated, any prophecy which has already been fulfilled—or any text which we deem to be of doubtful interpretation.

What then is the meaning of the text? To what period of the Church's history does it relate? Is it a fulfilled or an unfulfilled prophecy?

The text declares that when “the enemy” comes in like a raging “flood, the Spirit of the Lord would lift up a standard against him :” that the Lord will “repay fury to his adversaries, and recompense to his enemies ;” and that, in immediate connexion with this coming to punish his enemies—men shall ‘fear his name from the west, and his glory from the rising

of the sun,'—that he should come as 'Redeemer to *Zion*, and to them that turn from transgression in *Jacob*.'

Such is the plain teaching—the palpable meaning of the text. To what period of the Church's history does it relate? All Christians agree that by 'the Lord' here the Messiah is intended. Many consider the passage as referring to his first coming, and of course believe it to be fulfilled—or in a course of fulfilment.

But to this interpretation of the text there are objections which, to us, appear insuperable. At our Lord's first advent, he came not in the garb of a warrior—in power and majesty—"having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and clothed with the garments of vengeance;" but he was meek and lowly,—despised and rejected of men. He came, not to recompense his adversaries and to take vengeance upon his enemies; but, to offer an atonement for sin, and to proclaim the doctrine of pardon and salvation. It is true He then came to *Zion*, and was with the descendants of *Jacob* in *Judea*;—not however to be acknowledged and adored by the Jews, but to be rejected and crucified. "He came to his own, but his own received him not." There is, therefore, internal evidence, clear and conclusive, that the text relates not to the first advent, and has not yet received its accomplishment.

But in addition to these inferential arguments deduced from the prophecy itself, we have the direct testimony of the Holy Ghost. The inspired Apostle St. Paul,—himself a converted Jew,—writing to the Gentile Christians at Rome, and speaking of the conversion and restoration of the Jews as a future event, says—“I would not that ye should be ignorant of this mystery,—that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”* Where did St. Paul find the passage here quoted except in our text? He refers the date of its fulfilment to the period when all Israel shall be saved and the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in. Under the sanction of such a Commentator, we hesitate not to give a similar interpretation. We feel that we are in no danger of perverting it when we apply the text to those grand events of sorrow and of joy—of wrath and of mercy—of judgment and of salvation—that will be the accompaniments of the second Advent of our Lord.

We have, in our preceding discourses, treated of the prominent events which the pen of prophecy

* Rom. xi. 25-27.

has recorded as antecedents of the coming of our Lord to judgment—or the “great day of his appearing and kingdom.” We have traced the rise and growth of that great Mohammedan imposture employed, in the providence of God, as the scourge of guilty and idolatrous Churches in the East,—and of that formidable system of spiritual tyranny which corrupted the Church in the West, and, for so long a period, darkened the sanctuaries of God with the cloud of superstition, and kept his faithful witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and his servants groaning under the yoke of spiritual bondage.

We have had our attention arrested and fixed in admiration upon the bright day of light and deliverance which broke forth at the Reformation like the sun bursting through a cloud of thickest darkness. We have gazed with rapture upon the progress of the Angel flying through the unclouded firmament of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto all them that dwell upon the face of the earth. We have indulged in the bright visions of hope, and begun to flatter ourselves that all the evils and errors of the ‘latter times’—or the reign of superstition, were passing or had passed away forever, and that the light, whose renovated dawn we had hailed, would shine brighter and brighter till the whole world should rejoice in the radiance of millennial day.

But in the midst of these brilliant imaginings, we looked again more intently into the glass of prophecy, and we saw foreshadowings of a deeper darkness: they image forth the black cloud of "*the last days.*" That cloud is heterogeneous in its character. It contains within its bowels factions, and schisms, and heresies;—the impieties and blasphemies of infidelity; all the elements of individual and social crime—of riot and impurity, lawlessness and blood. It embodies all the crimes and abominations of Antichrist, in his last and worst form, to awaken the slumbering justice and call forth the flaming vengeance of the Most High when he shall come forth out of his place to shake terribly the earth.

It is with unaffected pain and humiliation that we have been obliged to refer to the factious spirit which has led to separations from the Church, and to the soul-destroying heresies which are its legitimate progeny. It is with profound mortification and regret that, in the midst of great cotemporary evils, which should incite us to closer union and to a more combined and undivided exertion of our Ecclesiastical strength, we are forced to advert to a schismatical, but, we trust, vain attempt within the Church to slacken the bonds of unity, and to carry us back from light to darkness, from liberty to bondage.*

*Some may think that the language here employed with reference to Mr. Newman and his followers is stronger than the facts will

It is with still greater humiliation and sorrow that we have been compelled to denounce that corrupting

justify; inasmuch as they have not separated *from* the Church and profess not to favour any divisions *in* it. The author would gladly blot it out if he could do so with a clear conscience. But if clergymen of a Reformed Church, eating of its bread and serving at its altars, speak in disparaging terms of the characters and work of the martyred men by whom the Reformation was effected: if, while in *theory* magnifying the powers and prerogatives of the Episcopal office, they, in *fact*, persist in advocating usages and propagating doctrines which have been censured by the Bishops who, according to the divine will, have the oversight and government over them: if, after having subscribed the Articles of religion in their plain and grammatical sense, they sophistically argue that men may conscientiously subscribe them, who belong to the corrupt Church against whose errors the Articles were intended to protect: then, even those among us who respect their private characters, and sympathize with their views so far as they are *truly Catholic*,—although disposed to acquit them of intentional schism, must admit the *schismatical tendency* of their course.

Soon after the republication of "The Tracts for the Times" was commenced in New York, the author took occasion to express his sentiments in reference to their dangerous tendency in a series of "Letters to a friend" published in the Episcopal Recorder over the signature of J. W. M. The sentiments therein expressed have been fully confirmed by the further revelations of the system in subsequent tracts up to its most offensive development in Tract No. 90, and in the review of Jewel's life and writings by the British Critic.

An attempt has been made in certain quarters to produce an impression that the views of the Tractarians are identical with those of High Churchmen. Although the author professes to be nothing more than a *Churchman*, yet, as an act of justice, he takes pleasure in stating the fact, that the particular views of the Pusey and Newman school have been condemned by none more decidedly than by many who choose to designate their grade of Churchmanship by the prefix *High*. We protest against the confounding of things essen-

leaven of infidelity which poisons the fountains of social purity and happiness, and exhibits its deadly influence in the multiplying crimes and shocking enormities of the present day.

We know not to what extent these evils may grow under the instigation of the powers of darkness. We know not that Antichrist may not still be revealed in some more odious and fearful form than we have yet conjectured. Satan may come down in yet greater wrath, knowing that his time is short. The signs of the times correspond, in some of their features at least, with those which the pencil of prophecy has drawn as characteristic of "the last days." The world is rapidly ripening for the harvest: the wheat for a harvest of mercy—the tares for a harvest of wrath. We say, therefore, The coming of the Lord draweth nigh! "Watch and pray, for ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh!"

tially distinct—while one of our (so called) High Church prelates places No. 90 "in no better a position than among *slippery* modes of explaining our Articles"—and speaks of the "*grievous error of perverting Catholicism, from a mere principle, to almost as infatuated a passion as that which brought about the crusades*"—and another of the same class has been heard to say, substantially, 'The present agitation (produced by the Tracts) will prove only like the ripple upon the surface of stagnant water—the shaking of a few dead leaves from the tree of life. In a few years, the names of those engaged in this controversy will pass away and be forgotten: but the spirit which dwelt in Cranmer, and Ridley, and Latimer, will still stand firm and unyielding between the truth and Rome!'

A scoffing world may inquire "Where is the promise of his coming?" A slumbering Church may say 'My Lord delayeth his coming. He will surely wait till after the Millenium,—till after the whole world is converted: a little more slumber, a little more sleep, a little more folding of the hands to sleep.' But the Bible says—"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; for as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be."* "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not till the flood came and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."† "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day."‡ "For behold

* St. Matt. xxiv. 27; Luke, xvii. 24.

† Matt. xxiv. 37-39.

‡ 2 Thess. i. 7-10.

the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, and of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*

O, friends and brethren! let us not be like the foolish virgins who slumbered and slept till the midnight cry was made, “Behold the Bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet him!” That cry is now made by the tongue of prophecy, and by the voice of Providence. Arise, then, and trim your lamps! “Let your loins be girded about and your lamps trimmed and burning; and ye yourselves like unto those who wait for the coming of their Lord!”

“For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay; fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the Islands he will repay recompense. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.”

* Jude, 14, 15.

The time of the second coming of our Lord is called 'the day of wrath—the day of terrors—the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God—the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.' Almost all the passages which foretell it, both in the Old Testament and in the New, represent it as being preceded and accompanied with scenes of wo and suffering, such as have never yet been recorded in the annals of this guilty world. All antichristian powers, that have opposed the Gospel and the glory of our Lord, shall then fall beneath the weight of his avenging arm. "The man of sin" will be consumed by the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming. Proud and haughty spiritual Babylon, who has so long flaunted in her glory, and luxury, and wealth, shall be trampled in the dust. The Beast, and the False Prophet shall be cast into the bottomless pit; and all the nations by whose favour and power antichristian systems have been maintained shall be sharers in the wrath that will attend their destruction.

The text represents our Lord as making his appearance in a time of gross wickedness and corruption, such as we have seen "the last days" to be. "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and

he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey : and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor : therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head ; and put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay ; fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies ; to the Islands he will repay recompense.” Who can fail to perceive in these words a description of the Captain of our salvation fully equipped for a contest with his enemies ? Under the like aspect he appeared to the Psalmist, when he exclaimed—“ Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O, Thou Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty, and ride forth prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness ; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the King’s enemies ; whereby the people fall under Thee.” And then, when the Messiah has thus prepared the way for the establishment of his kingdom by the destruction of his enemies—the Psalmist exclaims, with adoration, “ Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ; the sceptre of

thy kingdom is a right sceptre.”* In the second Psalm we have a like exhibition of the terrible judgments of the Lord upon opposing powers and anti-christian nations. “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed? He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh : the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree : the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me” (saith the Father to the Son,) “and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings : be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little : blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

The one hundred and tenth Psalm, which also celebrates the establishment of the Messiah in his kingdom, contains language of the same fearful im-

* Ps. xlv. 3-6.

port. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion : rule thou in the midst of thy enemies. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen ; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies ; he shall wound the heads over many countries."

Those scenes of terror and of judgment, immediately connected with the last day, will be attended with a purifying influence upon the Church—will separate, as by a winnowing process, the chaff from the wheat—the righteous from the wicked. For "the Son of Man will gather out of his kingdom all that offend, and them that do iniquity," and they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. As at the time of the flood, the righteous were preserved in the Ark,—as at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah righteous Lot and his family were preserved, and as at the destruction of Jerusalem the Christians fled to Pella, and were safe,—even so shall they be secure amidst the terrors of which we speak. The particulars of that awful scene which will close the drama of the present dispensation are thus described by our Lord : "There shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall

be. And except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved : but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."* In the close, and after that tribulation, our Lord shall come in the clouds.

It is impracticable in this course of Lectures, in which nothing more is attempted than a sketch or outline of the leading events connected with the great theme of our Lord's second Advent, to illustrate, or even to enumerate the passages of scripture which speak of the overthrow of antichristian powers, and the terrible judgments of God upon guilty nations. They are very numerous : much more so than any one would conjecture whose attention has not been especially turned to the investigation.†

Do you ask, How are these predictions to be fulfilled ? The proper answer is—*He that made them knoweth*. How were the wicked antediluvians destroyed ? How were Sodom and Gomorrah brought to an end ? How were Babylon, and Nineveh, and Tyre, and Jerusalem, and the Roman empire overthrown in exact fulfilment of the words of prophecy ? The pen of prophecy predicted the events,—the pen of history has recorded their literal fulfilment. He who has quenched the glory of the brightest em-

* Matt. xxiv. 21-22-29-30.

† The following may be referred to among others : Isaiah, xxxiv : Joel, iii. 1-10 ; Zephaniah, iii. 8-9 ; Ez. xxviii. 25-26 ; Hag. ii. 21-23 ; Jer. xxx, throughout ; Numbers, xxiv. 17-23.

pires, who has blotted out from existence those splendid cities which were once the pride of the earth,—who has often employed one guilty nation to be the instrument of vengeance upon another, will be at no loss for human agents to accomplish his ends, should it be his pleasure to employ them. He who sent his destroying angel to slay one hundred and eighty-five thousand men of the Assyrian army in a single night, who caused Pharaoh and his host to sink like lead in the mighty waters, who broke up the fountains [of the great deep to overwhelm the world of the ungodly, who rained down torrents of fire and brimstone upon the guilty cities of the plain—will be at no loss for supernatural and miraculous agency, should that be necessary for the accomplishment of the purposes of his wrath. Our only inquiry should be, What hath the Lord spoken? Has he clearly predicted coming scenes of judgment and desolation upon the earth? If so we may leave their accomplishment to his infinite wisdom and power. They will assuredly come. For “heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot or tittle of his word shall never fail.”

But we turn away from this awful theme, that we may direct our attention to those attractive and joyful events which are depicted in the chart of prophecy as immediately connected with the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds. The first of those,

demanding our notice, is THE RESTORATION AND CONVERSION OF THE JEWS.

“For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay; fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the Islands he will repay recompense. So shall they fear the Lord from the west and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.”

You perceive that the prophet here represents that the Redeemer's coming to Zion or Jerusalem, and the ‘turning away of ungodliness from Jacob’* shall be simultaneous with—or immediately succeeding the overthrow of antichristian powers, and the infliction of desolating judgments upon guilty nations. Such we believe to be the uniform representation of the prophetical Scriptures. We cannot now enter into an elaborate argument in proof of this position; but in addition to the quotations already made from the Psalms, will read a few of the many passages which relate to the subject, and leave you to form a deliberate judgment of their meaning.

* Rom. xi. 26.

“As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted *in Jerusalem*. And when ye see this your heart shall rejoice and the hand of the Lord shall be known towards his servants, and his indignation towards his enemies. For behold the Lord will come with fire, and with chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many.... And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarsish, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the Isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain, Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all

flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched: and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”* “Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up an highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, sought out, a city not forsaken.”† “I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold; they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men. The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their King shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them.”‡ “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many

* Is. lxvi. 13-24.

† Is. lxii. 10-12.

‡ Micah, ii. 12-13.

nations shall come and say, come, and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever. In that day saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halteth a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation; AND THE LORD SHALL REIGN OVER THEM IN MOUNT ZION from henceforth even forever.”* Then will be fulfilled the words of the angel at the annunciation, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his king-*

* Micah, iv. 1-7.

dom there shall be no end.”* “In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.”† “Behold the day of the Lord cometh, . . . Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. . . . And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter, shall it be. *And the Lord shall be king over all the earth:* in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.”‡ “Behold, I will send

* Luke, i. 32, 33.

† Zech. xii. 8-10.

‡ Zech. xiv. 1-9.

my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me : and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in ; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver : and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you to judgment.”* “For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings ; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked ; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts.”†

Christians have been so much in the habit of applying the predictions of the Messiah to his first

* Malachi, iii. 1-5.

† Malachi, iv. 1-3.

advent, and those which relate to Jerusalem or Zion, and the Jews, to the Christian Church and its Gentile members, that they fail to perceive the true interpretation and meaning of many of the Old Testament prophecies, and among them those which have now been quoted. We do not deny that a part of these predictions have some reference to the first advent, and were then partially fulfilled. Christ came to the second Temple, but not as “a refiner and purifier of silver”—with wrath, and terror, and fire, as he will be revealed in the last day. When the Prophets speak of Zion they mean Zion, not the Christian Church. When they speak of Jerusalem they mean Jerusalem, and not any city or nation of Gentile Christians. When they speak of Judah, of Jacob, of Israel, they mean, not Christianized Gentiles, but the descendants of Abraham.*

Mr. Keith, who has written a popular book on the prophecies, has shown how all which relate to the overthrow of Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Edom, and Jerusalem, to the dispersion of the Jews and the lost ten tribes of Israel were fulfilled to the very letter. He could not have done otherwise, without belying and contradicting all history. But when he

*It is not denied that the Christian Church is sometimes called Zion, and that the promises made to God’s ancient people, the Jews, may truthfully be applied, in a way of accommodation, to Gentile believers in Jesus; but this is not their distinctive meaning—their primary application.

comes to treat of those which relate to the re-building of Jerusalem, the restoration of Judah and the lost tribes of Israel to their own land, and to the setting up of Messiah's kingdom and his Millennial reign on earth, he departs from all the safe principles which had guided him before, and adopts that wretched system of metaphorical and spiritual interpretation which makes the plainest prophecies enigmas, and converts the Bible into a riddle-book.

As when the Lord threatened to scatter his people, and make them a by-word and hissing among all nations, we understand him as speaking literally, because we know, by the event, that not one jot or tittle of the threatening has failed; even so, when he promises that he will again bring them to the knowledge of his truth, and restore them from the countries whither they have been scattered; when he declares that their holy city shall be re-built in more than its original splendor, that their beloved land shall be restored to more than its primeval fertility and abundance, and that the Messiah shall reign over them;—we deem it absurd to apply these promises to Christians, who have not been “scattered and peeled”—nor made “a by-word and hissing” among all nations,—or to the Christian Church, which has never been overthrown and trodden in the dust by the Gentiles.*

*“I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of Sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest

We take God's word as it stands, and interpret the prophecies according to the plain meaning of the language in which they are announced. We believe that He who has executed his threatenings upon his once elect and chosen people for their sins, will not fail to execute the promises he has made in regard to their conversion, restoration and glory. It will be said, by some, that many of the prophecies of this class, in the Old Testament, were fulfilled in the restoration of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. This is true. But some of those we have quoted are from the *last three prophets*, who wrote after that wonderful deliverance of God's people, and you may be satisfied, from a careful examination of them, that not one of those quoted in this lecture received its full accomplishment in that event.

Our faith on this important point cannot be better expressed than in the words of the prophet Jeremiah: words too unequivocal to be misunderstood; and which, I am bold to say, have not been fulfilled, either in the return from captivity in Babylon, or in the first Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous BRANCH, and a *King shall* from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art which changes the meaning of words, as Alchymes does or would do the substance of metals, makes of any thing what it lists, and brings, in the end, all truth to nothing."—HOOKER.

reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.** Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the Lord liveth which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them; and *they shall dwell in their own land.*"*

This subject—the conversion and restoration of God's ancient people, is one of deep and engrossing interest to every student of prophecy. The remainder of this discourse, therefore, shall be devoted to a brief sketch of the fate of that wonderful people whose history and fortunes occupy so large a space in the sacred volume.

You need not be reminded of the important place assigned to the Jews in the scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments. You well know that they were the chosen people of God. To them "pertained the adoption, and the covenants, and the promises: whose are the fathers: and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." God's providential government

* Jer. xxiii. 5-8.

of the world was so directed as to promote their interests, and to fulfil the promises which he made unto their fathers. Their whole history presents, as it were, a succession of miracles from the calling of Abraham to the destruction of Jerusalem. Need I remind you how God delivered them from sore bondage in Egypt with his mighty hand and stretched out arm? how he conducted them by an inspired leader during their forty years journeying in the wilderness! how he gave them a perfect law amidst the miraculous thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai, supplied them with food by raining down manna from the clouds, satisfied their thirst with water from the rock, and finally drove out their enemies before them and gave them possession of the promised land? Need I remind you that he fought their battles and interposed for their protection? that when he had permitted them, for their sins, to be carried captives into Babylon, He, at the end of seventy years, fulfilled his promise by restoring them again to their own land? I might go through their whole history, noticing the succession of judges and monarchs he raised up for them, and tell you of the Prophets whom He sent, in successive ages, to make known his judgments and mercies, till, in the fulness of time, he sent the Prophet of prophets, his only begotten Son—the light of the world—the glorious antitype of the legal sacrifices—“of whom Moses in the law, and the

prophets did write :” And at the close of this enumeration of wonders, such as can be found in the history of no other people, I might say to you, in the language of Joshua, “Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord hath promised : all have come to pass ; and not one thing hath failed thereof.”

It is true that the chosen people, as a body, did not welcome the Messiah. “He came to his own, but his own received him not ; they crucified the Lord of glory.” And then, for their impenitence and unbelief, judgment came upon them to the uttermost. Their holy Temple was defiled ; their glorious city was laid in ruins ; their civil and ecclesiastical polity was destroyed ; their sacrifice and oblation ceased ; and they were driven out “scattered and peeled, to be a by-word, and a hissing among all nations.”

It is too commonly thought that, with their rejection of the Messiah, God’s interest in the Jews came to an end : that He would no longer regard them, except to visit them with the inflictions of his wrath. The popular belief is that they were then finally cut off from his covenant, and are no more to be blessed, otherwise than as individuals among them may be converted to the Christian faith. But it should be remembered that their rejection of the Messiah and consequent sufferings were distinctly foretold ; and that they are preserved, notwithstanding their scatter-

ed and suffering condition, in conformity with the announced purpose of Jehovah : still preserved, as by miracle, a distinct and peculiar people—marked out by their features, principles, and habits, as a separate race ; dispersed among all nations, yet mingling with none : and in this remarkable fact, we behold a fulfilment of the prophecy “Israel shall dwell *alone* among the nations.”

Why are they thus preserved as a peculiar people? no less so than when brought out of Egypt? We may be answered, It is for a striking proof of the truth of prophecy—and as perpetual witnesses of God’s judgment against unbelief. But while we admit this, we ask, Are they not thus marvellously preserved for some ulterior and more glorious end? What saith St. Paul? “Hath God cast off his people whom he foreknew? Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid : but rather, through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles : how much more their fulness ! As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”*

* Rom. xi. 11-12, 28-29.

The attention of the Jews, throughout their wide dispersion upon earth, is directed to their holy city, and their favored land. Whether in Portugal, or India, in Bokarra, or in London,—they are waiting for the coming of the Messiah to repair the tabernacle of Jacob, which is fallen down, to restore the throne of David, and to reign over them in Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his saints gloriously. Now however carnal and grossly erroneous their conceptions of the glory which awaits their nation may be, yet the Lord will not fail to perform the mercy promised to their fathers, and to fulfil his holy covenant. He will restore the preserved of Judah, and bring back the lost tribes of Israel, whose hiding place has, thus far, eluded the search and scrutiny of men. The time is coming when they “shall no more be termed forsaken: neither shall their land any more be termed desolate: but they shall be called Hephzi-bah, and their land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in them, and their land shall be married: and they shall be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken.”*

Did the Lord fulfil to the seed of Abraham the promise of their deliverance from Egypt, and of their redemption from Babylon? Even so will He fulfil the promises he has made of their restoration to their own land from their present dispersion among all nations. The evangelical prophet em-

* Isaiah, lxii. 4-12.

employs this soul-stirring language as descriptive of the reign of the Messiah, "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Patmos, and from Cush, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."*

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born."† For lo! 'He cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him shall mourn because of him'.‡ The Jewish nation, brought to repentance,—mourning on account of their guilty unbelief, shall then hail that Holy One whom their fathers crucified, as Lord and Christ.

* Isaiah, xi. 10-13; see also, Jer. xxiii. 2-8.

† Zech. xii. 10.

‡ Rev. i. 7.

When they see him again, they will exclaim "Hosannah ! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord !" In that day, the restored and converted nation will sing this song—"O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: he also is become my salvation. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."*

We believe, therefore, that the Jews are marvelously preserved, in the providence of God, to answer a most important purpose in the execution of the Divine counsels, and to perform a distinguished part in the great work of the conversion of the world. The first propagators of the Gospel were Jews, and the word of the Lord ran very swiftly. Since the Apostolic age its advancement has been comparatively slow. But in the last days, the word of the Lord shall again go forth from Zion, and his Law from Jerusalem. The "living waters" of salvation shall "flow forth from Jerusalem," on every side, to refresh and fertilize the moral world. Then shall we behold a spectacle, such as has never yet been exhibited in the history of the Church: "A nation shall be born in a day:" "the fulness of

* Isaiah, xii. 1, 2, 6.

the Gentiles shall come in: and all Israel shall be saved.”

The Jews, in their dispersion, having learned the languages and studied the characters of the various tribes and people of the earth, will be admirably qualified for the work of missions. As their obstinate unbelief constitutes one principal impediment to the propagation of the Gospel,—how wonderful will be the effect produced upon all nations among whom they have sojourned—when, abandoning their long continued prejudices, they shall embrace the religion they have despised, and place the diadem of glory upon the head of Him whom they pierced and crucified! “If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead!”* No sooner will the Heathen world witness the restoration and conversion of the Jews, than “they will cast their idols to the moles and to the bats,” and “ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” “For thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts the holy mountain. Yea, many peo-

* Rom. xi. 15.

ple and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.” For “the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. Then, from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.”*

The restoration and conversion of the Jews will usher in those glorious scenes so graphically sketched by the pencil of prophecy in the chapter immediately following our text. No sooner will “the Lord come to Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob,” than the address will be made to the converted and restored nation: “Arise, shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Who are these that fly as a cloud; and as the doves to their windows? The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending

* Zech. viii. 23, 3, 22; Isa. ii. 2, 3; Mic. iv. 1, 2; Malachi, i. 11.

unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.”*

We cannot more appropriately conclude this Lecture than by reciting Pope’s beautiful paraphrase of the passage just quoted.

“Rise, crown’d with light, Imperial Salem rise!
 Exalt thy tow’ring head and lift thine eyes!
 See heaven its sparkling portals wide display,
 And break upon thee in a flood of day!
 See a long race thy spacious courts adorn,
 See future sons and daughters yet unborn,

* Isaiah, lx.

In crowding ranks on every side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies !
See barb'rous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light and in thy temple bend !
See thy bright altars throng'd with prostrate kings,
While every land its joyous tribute brings !
The seas shall waste, the skies to smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away ;
But fix'd his word, his saving power remains—
Thy realm shall last, Thy own Messiah reigns."

LECTURE SIXTH.

THE HARVEST OF THE CHURCH.

ST. MARK, CHAPTER IV. VERSE 29.

“And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

THIS is the conclusion of the parable of the seed which a man sowed in his ground, and which advanced through the different stages of growth; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear: and when the grain had ripened, then the harvest was gathered. In this way our Lord illustrates the advancement of his Church, or the Gospel dispensation, till the final judgment shall take place at his second coming. He uses a similar illustration in the parable of the wheat and the tares, which grow together in the same field until the harvest—when the wheat will be gathered into the garner, but the tares will be cast into the fire. Thus the righteous

and the wicked live together in the world, and even in the visible Church, and will continue to do so till the last day, when a separation will take place. "The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels."

The world is fast preparing for this consummation. We behold an apparently paradoxical state of things around us. Daring infidelity on the one hand, lively faith upon the other. Under one aspect of society, we behold most affecting exhibitions of the disorders, heresies, and wickedness which mark "the last days;" and on the other, a bold profession of the truth, an eager attention to spiritual things, indications of increasing unity and purity in the Church, and a holy zeal and benevolent energy in the work of propagating the Gospel which would have done honour to our religion in its best days. It is now very much "as it was before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans: the Jewish state was ripening for judgment; at the same time the Christian-Jewish Church was in its full activity and diffusiveness. Two harvests are before us: a harvest of tares for the burning, a harvest of wheat for the garner. Two reapings mark the great day of tribulation: the harvest for the Son of Man to gather to his glory,—the vintage for the Son of Man to tread in his wrath."*

* Bickersteth.

In our last Lecture we called your attention to those tremendous judgments upon antichristian powers, and to the scenes of desolation, and misery and blood with which wicked communities and nations will be visited in those days of unexampled tribulation which will usher in the second coming of our Lord. We also dwelt upon some of those numerous passages of Scripture which clearly teach the restoration of the Jews to their own land, their conversion, and the consequent conversion of the Gentile nations as intimately connected with the great day of Christ's appearing and kingdom.

But as there are some who object to this interpretation of the prophecies that it is calculated to damp the benevolent enterprise, and discourage the missionary operations of the day, I now invite your attention to some remarks upon the important work which, under the figure of the harvest of the Church, is to be done, both for Jews and Gentiles, preparatory to the coming of Christ.

First, *for the Jews*. We should never, in our interpretations of the prophecies, lose sight of, or cease to feel an interest in, the Jews. They were the chosen depositaries of God's truth, the maintainers of his worship, the objects of his peculiar care and love, and the recipients of his promises, from the first establishment of his Church on earth. The Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, were Jews,

yea, our Blessed Lord himself was a Jew. To that people we are indebted for this Sacred volume which is the charter of our hopes and our guide to immortality. And as they were the first in the reception of the divine mercies, so will they be first, as our elder brethren, in the glory and blessedness that will pertain to the kingdom of the Messiah.

Wherever we behold a Jew, we behold a miraculous testimonial of the truth of the Bible, a living evidence that the kingdom of Christ will come, a loud reprover of unbelief,—a silent preacher of righteousness in the midst of an unbelieving and guilty world.

“There hath visited us,” saith an able writer, “a preacher such as never preached to a reckless world before, on repentance and judgment to come, since the days of Noah; a preacher who bears the sign of his commission stamped upon the man, both in body and mind; a preacher who, like Adam, can speak from experience, of the sorrows of ruin and degradation: a preacher who has been preaching ever since the Church of Christ upon earth began, and shall preach until the end draw nigh. What! is there indeed a corner of Christendom unpenetrated by that mysterious stranger, who, bearing in his peculiar features the lineaments of Abraham, and thus at a glance announcing to us from what high estate he had fallen; cherishing in his spirit all the sullied

pride of ruined greatness; exhibiting in his dealings, all the caution and timidity of the despised stranger; attracting by his attachment to the carnalities of his abrogated law, continued mockery and derision; moving by his superstition, his obstinacy, and blindness, the pity of some, the contempt of others, the neglect of all; deprived even of the only ordained assurance of pardon, by being denied all means of sacrifice; and holding in his hand the word of God, without a spirit to understand it; is there, indeed, any Church in Christendom, before which the Jew, this awful monitor, has never appeared? O! his prophetic character seems to cling to him still; every where he appears as God's herald to warn against disobedience, to proclaim his judgments; and wherever he appears, there should be, as in the presence of the prophets of old, humiliation and awe. Thus doth this preacher, traversing daily Christ's kingdom, unceasingly admonish Churches and individuals; and, standing in our luxurious cities, should be to us as Jonah amid Nineveh, summoning us to repentance and mourning."*

"The Jews remain, present in all countries, and with a home in none: intermixed, and yet separated: neither amalgamated nor lost; but like the mountain streams which are said to pass through lakes of another kind of water, and keep a native quality to

* Rev. R. W. Evans.

repel commixture, they hold communion without union, and may be traced, as rivers without banks, in the midst of the alien element which surrounds them.

“Yes, my brethren, only the hand of God can do this. The Jew remains a problem which infidelity can never solve. A nation, now in the close of the eighteenth century of her dispersion, as distinct from the fluctuating multitudes of the nations, as the Islands of the ocean are from the surrounding waves. The waves rise and fall, rage and subside again into quietness; but the firm rooted rocks of the Islands remain unmoved. The empires of the earth, from Nimrod to Napoleon, like the waves of the sea, have chafed each their little hour of rage (rage, too, in persecuting bitterness) against the rock of Judah, and have each sunk out of vision to rise no more. But the Jewish nation, the mountain of the Lord’s house, based on a sure foundation, has stood, and stands, and will stand established in the top of the mountains, that all the earth may know and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done it, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it, according as it is written: ‘This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.’”*

* Rev. Hugh McNeille.

We are inclined to believe that this extraordinary people, as a nation, will remain in blindness and unbelief until "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled:" the veil will remain upon their hearts until they be turned to the Lord at the second coming of the Messiah; when, according to his own prediction, they will hail him as their king, and exclaim, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

It may be objected that this belief is inconsistent with the general truth that God converts men only by the instrumentality of his word, and, consequently, that if the Jews are ever to be converted, it must be as Gentiles are, by the preaching of the Gospel. This is undoubtedly true so far as *individuals* are concerned under the present dispensation. But we must bear in mind that, with regard to the chosen people *as a nation*, almost all God's dealings have been *miraculous*. Their history, from the calling of Abraham down to the present period, is made up of a succession of wonders.

May we not behold in the calling and conversion of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, a type or symbol of the conversion of the Jewish nation, the divinely appointed instrument for the conversion of the Gentile nations? Saul of Tarsus was 'an Hebrew of the Hebrews; and after the strictest sect, he

lived a Pharisee.' Such was his zeal for the law of Moses, that he was filled with enmity to the Gospel, and, with obstinate malignity, persecuted the disciples of Jesus unto strange cities. Was he not, in this respect, a fair sample of the majority of his countrymen? Are not their prejudices as obstinate, their enmity to Christianity as violent as his? And how was that ancient embittered opposer of the Cross converted? Not by the preaching of the Gospel, or by any other ordinary means. No. But, in the midst of his persecuting career, the Lord Jesus met him, and made a personal manifestation of his glory. A light shone round about him, above the brightness of the firmament; he heard, with trembling awe, the voice of Jesus, whom he persecuted,—and he who fell to the ground a blasphemer of the Gospel, arose to be the successful witness and propagator of the faith which he had once laboured to destroy. Alluding to his conversion, St. Paul says: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, *for a pattern* to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."* Now is it visionary or fanatical to suppose that, as he was an example of the long-suffering of God to other enemies and persecutors of the truth,—even so, his miraculous change was itself "a

*1 Tim. i. 16.

pattern” of the manner in which his unbelieving nation shall be converted, in the last day, by the personal manifestation of Jesus Christ to them in his glory?

But notwithstanding our belief that the Jews, as a nation, will not be converted till they shall behold Him whom they pierced coming in the clouds, we doubt not that many individuals among them have been, and will be gathered to Christ, by the blessing of the Spirit upon ordinary means, as “the first fruits” of that mighty harvest which is to be gathered at the last day.

Within the memory of some of us a great change has taken place in the feelings of Christians with respect to the ancient people of God. The political restraints and civil disabilities to which they were subjected have been removed in some Christian countries. We no longer cherish towards them sentiments of hatred and contempt. But, as the prophecies are better understood, the sympathies of the Christian public have become powerfully excited in behalf of the seed of Abraham, and many benevolent efforts have been put forth to remove their prejudices, and convert them to the Christian faith. Societies for meliorating their condition have been instituted; schools for the instruction of their children have been established; the New Testament, translated into their sacred language, has been wide-

ly disseminated,—and many, in the spirit of the Master, have gone forth to reclaim the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Blessed be God ! these evangelical labours have not been in vain. To many of that people the cross of Christ is no longer a stumbling block. In one institution in London there are upwards of three hundred converted Jews. For several years past, twenty, upon an average, have been confirmed by the Bishop of London every year. In England alone forty Jewish converts have become Christian ministers. In Prussia, where no Jew can be baptized without being first fully instructed in the principles of Christianity, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight have been baptized within fifteen years past.* Several converted Rabbis are now preaching Jesus as the Messiah, and a powerful party of Israelites have rejected the Talmud, and separated from the rest of their brethren, with a determination no longer to follow the traditions of the Elders, but to be [guided only by the instructions of Moses and the Prophets.†

He must be a very careless observer of the signs of the times who fails to perceive that there is now a more powerful movement among the Jews in refer-

* These statistics are taken from the Reports of "the Society for the promotion of Christianity among the Jews."

† This separation took place almost simultaneously on the continent of Europe and in England.

ence to Christianity, and also among Christians in reference to the conversion of the Jews, than has ever before taken place since the age of the Apostles. Among those signs there is one event, of recent occurrence, so remarkable in itself, and so pregnant with the mightiest results, that we cannot pass over it without particular notice.

Within the last few months two Protestant governments of Europe have conferred together—not about schemes for the oppression of their subjects, or for the extension of their temporal dominion and glory—but about the spiritual welfare of the Jews and the extension of pure Christianity in the East,—making the Holy City the centre of Evangelical operations—the radiating point of Gospel truth amidst the darkness of the surrounding nations. As the result of conferences between those high powers, the Church of England resolved to send forth a Bishop to preach the Gospel and exercise his sacred functions on the very spot where the first Council of the Church was held, in the infancy of our religion, by the twelve Apostles. The learned divine who was first selected for this august mission, declined the appointment, on the ground that a converted Jew would be the most fitting and appropriate messenger of the Church to that interesting region. The Church concurred with him in this opinion : and a clergyman of eminent piety, and distinguished talents, having the additional

recommendation of belonging to the tribe of Judah,* has been consecrated and sent forth to plant the first Reformed Church upon the hill of Zion, and to perform the high duties of the Apostolic office in the See originally occupied by the Apostle St. James, after whom this modern Episcopate is named. The King of Prussia provides one half of the fund which is needed for the support of the Bishopric in Jerusalem, and the Queen of England the other.

Who can think of such a fact as this, taking place within the last three months,—a Protestant Episcopal Christian Church founded in ‘the city of the Great King’—under the supervision of a descendant of Abraham—endowed by two of the most powerful sovereigns of Christendom—with the permission and sanction of the Sultan the main supporter of the Mohammedan imposture—and not be filled with amazement, as if the age of miracles were about to be restored! Who can fail to recognise, in this stupendous event, an earnest of the greater wonders that are to be exhibited when, in the language of the prophet, “Kings shall be nursing fathers, and Queens shall be nursing mothers” to the converted Jewish Church of Christ! Who can estimate the influence which, by God’s blessing, this movement may exert upon the Jews—upon the corrupt Orien-

* Rev’d Michael Solomon Alexander, D. D.

tal Churches—upon Mohammedanism—and upon the religious interests of the world !

To form a true judgment of the effect of this extraordinary movement we must look not only at its action upon the religions of the East, but also, at its reaction upon the cause of Christianity in the West. It is understood to be one design of the good King of Prussia, in the endowment of the Bishopric of St. James' at Jerusalem, through that channel, combined with the Episcopacy in America and Scotland, to obtain an Episcopal ministry for his own dominions. Should this be effected, it would afford a most striking demonstration of the unity and Catholicity of the Protestant Churches. The placing of the Reformed and Lutheran communities of Europe under a pure Episcopal regimen would impart a strength to the cause of the Reformation before which the power of the 'Man of sin' would be shaken to its foundations, and the work of propagating the Gospel would be carried forward with unexampled success.*

* The aspect of this interesting movement has undergone some change since the delivery of the above Lecture. Through the agency of the Chevalier Bunsen, the ambassador of Prussia, seconded by the personal influence of the Prussian Monarch, there is a fair prospect that the Archbishop of Canterbury and other English Bishops will be authorized by act of parliament to consecrate three Bishops for Prussia, by which means, the wishes of the pious Sovereign will be most readily accomplished. The following extract from a late English paper, will, in this connexion, be read with interest.

The signs of the times afford ground for the belief that a pure Christian Church of converted Jews will

“In a sketch of the Chevalier Bunsen’s distinguished career, which is given in another part of this paper, the reader will find allusions made to the strong disposition which the late King of Prussia entertained, and which has been inherited from his father by the reigning Monarch, to obtain from England, and engraft upon the system of the Lutheran Church as it exists in his dominions, a true and Apostolic Episcopacy. We have reason to believe, that as the first step towards the accomplishment of that great end was taken when, under the joint protection of England and Prussia, Dr. Alexander became Bishop of St. James, in Jerusalem, so his Majesty, availing himself of the opportunity which the christening of the Prince of Wales affords, comes over for the express purpose of ascertaining how far the time has arrived for completing a work so happily begun. Moreover, the fact of his Majesty putting himself personally forward in the matter, not only proves that he has the arrangement much at heart, but seems to imply that on the part of the proper authorities here every encouragement will be given towards effecting it. We may, therefore, take it for granted, that all preliminary negotiations having been brought to a point, the King of Prussia’s residence at the court of Queen Victoria will be rendered memorable in all time to come, by the fulfilment of a hope which only the most sanguine used to cherish, and which not even they, a quarter of a century ago, ever expected to see, in their own day, at least, realized.

“There is no calculating the amount of good which this arrangement, when completed, must effect. Considered as a religious movement, it is by far the most important that has occurred since the Reformation. It will give back to the whole of Protestant Germany the Churchship of which she was for a long time too regardless, and it will operate as a complete bar to any revival of the Neologian absurdities, by which the theology of Protestant Germany was once disfigured. For nobody can doubt that so soon as Prussia has an Apostolical Episcopacy established, the smaller States which look up to her for protection, and in some sort depend upon her, will be

be established in Jerusalem, which will be an attractive point to the multitudes of pilgrims annually resorting to the Holy City; that the Gospel will be

prompt to receive from her the very same boon which she has received from England. We therefore count on seeing, ere long, such a Church built up on the Continent of Europe as shall absorb—for we will not use the word extinguish—the many irregular communions which for three centuries have divided a large portion of it among them, and which, having no plea of a primitive usage to urge, nor deriving any extraneous support from the governments of the countries wherein they took root, have never been able to exercise any useful control over either the faith or the moral practice of the people.

“So soon as this great work is finished, Christian Europe will see a sight, such as was never seen before. There will be no more room to object, any where, or on any ground, to the term, “The Protestant Church.” The Protestant or Protesting Church, will then be as much one as the the Church of Rome, against whose corruptions her protest is directed. Tracing back her Episcopacy to the Apostles themselves, she will be able, whether in Germany, or in England, or in America, to say, that the religion which she teaches is that of the Bible, and that her doctrines are enforced by an authority not less venerable than that of the Supreme Pontiff himself. Will Rome, in the face of such a power as this, be able to retain her errors? When we have taken away from her the only solid argument which she has ever urged, or been in a condition to urge, against us, will she long hold out against the force of truth? We do not believe it. If union be strength in civil matters, far more is the case so, where the cause of the Church is tried. Protestantism has hitherto fought at disadvantage against Popery, because the word Protestantism was received as synonymous with confusion in matters of discipline and constitution—of heresies and schisms in points of faith. But, give us one Protesting Church—a Church, which protests against the corruptions of Popery—and we do not doubt, with God’s blessing, that Popery will either reform itself, or, by and by, disappear from off the face of the earth.”

preached there with something like its primitive purity ; that converts will be added to the Christian community, from the wide ranks of the dispersion : so that, even if we should not be so highly favored in our day as to see the Law again going forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, yet multitudes of converted Israelites may be gathered there, as “ a people prepared for the Lord ! ”

But is it only among the Jews that a great work is to be accomplished preparatory to the coming of our Lord ? O, no ! He is to call out from among the *Gentiles* a people for his praise.

The preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, with a view to their conversion, has been in progress during generations and centuries that are past. We think, however, there are clear indications, given in the prophecies, that amidst the confusions and blasphemies of “ the last days,” yea, that even amidst the great tribulations which will immediately precede the coming of Christ, the work of converting the Heathen shall go forward with augmented energy, and with results unprecedented in the previous history of the Church.

We are told that, “ In the last days ” God will “ pour out of his Spirit upon all flesh.” This prophecy of Joel was, indeed, partly fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, but it will probably receive a more glorious fulfilment, when God will “ show wonders

in the heavens, and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke ; when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, *before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.*”* We have shown that the same truth is taught in the text, where the progress of the Church is compared to the gradual growth of corn to perfection, “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear ;” and then, “when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is ripe.” It is also clearly intimated in the parable of the Great Supper, where we are told that “when *supper-time* was come,” the Lord sent forth his servants into the lanes and streets, and into the highways and hedges, to compel them to come in ; to bring in the halt, and the blind, and the maimed,—yea, all that they could, that his wedding might be furnished with guests.

“To this glorious harvest of souls to be gathered into the Redeemer’s Church before our Lord’s second coming, we would refer the fuller statement given in the Apocalypse, ‘I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the Temple, crying with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and

* Joel, ii. 28-31.

reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust (or threw) in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.’* It does not appear that the Son of man is here represented as personally coming to the earth; it seems rather the gathering of a harvest before his personal coming; the harvest of the Church. This is a bright hope in the midst of the dark scenes connected with the revelations of Antichrist in the last days.

“The analogy of the last gatherings in the Jewish dispensation as recorded in the Acts; the promises of the latter rain as well as the former;† the literal assurance that God will in the last days pour out of his Spirit upon all flesh; the reason assigned for the delay of the coming of Christ, that ‘God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,’ may well strengthen these hopes.

“Another prediction‡ especially brings this *vast harvest yet to be gathered* within the time of the great tribulation. The prophecy alludes to *the feast of Tabernacles*, called the feast of ingathering, when the harvest of the earth was fully completed, and which was to be observed in memory of the deliverance from Egypt. The Passover and the Pentecost have had their antitypes, (in the crucifixion of

* Rev. xiv. 15, 16. † Joel. ii. 23; Zech. x. 1. ‡ Rev. vii.

the Lamb of God as a sacrifice for sin, and the first great outpouring of the Holy Ghost :) that of the *Tabernacles* is yet to be observed,* and its glorious antitype will be exhibited in the extended conversion out of all nations to Christ : a great multitude which no man can number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. But we are expressly told ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation.’ The original is still more emphatic—out of *the* tribulation—even the *great one*. There is but one such tribulation ; and it is yet to come. Hence we may conclude that the great harvest will then be gathered.”†

Such, my brethren, are the intimations given in the prophecies respecting the harvest spoken of in our text ; and, unless we are greatly deceived, we may behold, in the signs of the times, indications, too plain to be mistaken, that the time for their fulfilment cannot be very far off.

Do the prophecies inform us that God will pour out of his spirit upon all flesh ? In how many memorable instances has this inestimable blessing, without which all others are vain, begun to be enjoyed ? In answer to prayer, not only in favoured cities and regions of our own country,—but in all parts of the

* Zech. xiv. 16. † Bickersteth's Guide to the Prophecies, p. 258.

Christian world, the Spirit of grace has come down "like rain upon the mown grass, and like showers which water the earth." Extensive and powerful revivals of religion* have taken place, in which multitudes have been brought to add the life to the profession of faith, and the power to the form of godliness. There is, probably, at the present time, more humility, faith, energy, and holy benevolence in the Church of God than was ever manifested at any former period, except in its earliest days.

The outpouring of the Spirit has been followed, not only with individual conversions, and reformation of communities, but also with increased ef-

* The author need not say that, by the use of this abused phrase, he has no wish to sanction those fanatical excitements gotten up by human machinery, and conducted upon principles essentially Pelagian, by which so much harm has been done to the souls of men, and so much dishonor brought upon the cause of Christ among some Christian denominations in different parts of our country. We have reason to be thankful that our fixed Liturgy, and other venerable institutions of the Church afford a barrier of protection to our communion against those *religious hurricanes*, which, too often, leave nothing but barrenness and desolation in their train. By 'a revival of religion' we mean a season of more than ordinary zeal, activity, and enjoyment among Christian ministers and people, accompanied by the awakening and conversion of many sinners: a season which in the moral world, has a strong resemblance to that of Spring in the natural world: and whose delightful influence must be ascribed to the special grace of the Holy Spirit giving more than ordinary effect to the preaching of the Gospel and other established means of grace. With a view to such blessed results surely every Christian will pray "O Lord, revive thy work!"

forts for the propagation of the Gospel, and the salvation of the world. As the refreshing showers of Spring and the genial warmth of Summer are followed by Autumnal fruits, even so the reviving influences of grace have been followed by works of piety and love. Do the Scriptures teach us that "at evening time there shall be light;" that when the wedding supper of the Lamb is just ready the servants shall be sent out, in greater numbers, and with more pressing importunity, to bring in the guests? We behold in the missionary operations of the present day, something like a revival of apostolic zeal, a continual multiplication of laborers in the Gospel field, and a growing determination, on the part of the Church, to plant the standard of the cross in every Continent, and upon every Island,—till men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost shall proclaim, to every nation and tribe of the Gentile world, the unsearchable riches of Christ.*

* The author is far from believing that any body of professing Christians in this day comes up to the Apostolic standard, or performs its full amount of duty in the work of Missions. The Moravian brethren come nearer to it than any others: for among them, their entire ministry, and the whole of their surplus funds, are devoted to that work. But in our branch of the Christian Church the interest in this holy cause goes forward at a very sluggish pace, even if it be at all progressive. The exhausted state of our Missionary fund, leading to the necessity of curtailing our operations at home and abroad, affords a sad contrast between our *inclination* and our *ability* to diffuse the blessings of the Gospel,—and at the same time, a humiliating

Do the prophecies lead us to believe that the Gospel will be attended with increasing power, and that there will be a great ingathering of souls to Christ, who will swell the number of the subjects of his Millennial reign on earth? Lift up your eyes and look upon the fields,—see if they are not already whitening for the harvest! The prospects of modern Missionaries, in every part of the heathen world where they are already planted, are, perhaps, as encouraging as could reasonably be expected, considering the immense difficulties with which they have had to contend. In some regions their labours have been crowned with a remarkable and signal blessing from God. The natives of the South Sea and Sandwich Islands have abandoned their debasing idolatries, and, to a great extent, have experienced the reforming and sanctifying power of the Gospel of Christ. In many parts of India the Gospel has proved itself ‘mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds’ of sin and satan—and to the purifying of some of the most polluted of the human race. Within the last two years, in Krishnaghur, one hundred native villages have received the Gospel, and more than three thousand intelligent and well educated converts have been added to the

illustration of our apathy in redeeming the pledge given to the world when we proclaimed ourselves to be a Missionary Church! O Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to do thy will!

Church of Christ.* And within the past week we have received the delightful intelligence that the poor degraded *Druses* of Mount Lebanon have sent an earnest petition to the Church of England to furnish them with Christian schools and Christian missionaries.

These blessed tokens of triumph over the powers of darkness have led some to believe that the Millennium is nearly past; others, that we are now basking in the splendid rays of its meridian; and others again, that we behold its early dawn. But we cannot persuade ourselves to believe that any state of things which the Church has beheld, or does now behold, exhibits any striking resemblance to the glory and splendor—the purity and joy which the Scriptures speak of as characteristic of the holy, universal kingdom of the Messiah. No. The scenes described in terms of sublimity and rapture, as pertaining to that Millennial reign—which we shall soon proceed to consider—are widely different from that variegated, mixed, and apparently contradictory state of things which marks the present condition of the Church, and of the world. We do not believe that, under the influence of the means now in progress, the whole world is to be converted, but simply, as the Scripture expresses it, that “the Gospel must first

* Vide, the interesting letters of Daniel Wilson, the Apostolic Bishop of Calcutta, addressd to the Church Missionary Society.

be preached *as a witness to all nations:*” and then cometh the End. We look upon the Church as now performing that office in reference to the second coming of Christ which John the Baptist performed in reference to his first coming. In the success of the Gospel, the outpouring of the Spirit, and the consequent conversion of souls, at the present period,—we behold ‘the first fruits’ of that mighty harvest which is to be gathered when ‘a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, shall stand before the throne, and before the Lamb,’ as a people for the Lord, prepared to welcome him at his coming.

Now is there any thing in this view to discourage Christian effort, or to lessen the importance of the Missionary work! What! because the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, shall his servants, therefore, slumber and sleep! Should it not, rather, be the most powerful incentive to faith and benevolence—to activity and prayer? “The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” Behold, Christian! thy Lord cometh, to separate the tares from the wheat—the goats from the sheep—the wicked from the just! What thou doest, do quickly! There are millions of your fellow creatures who are unprepared for his coming. O! hasten to send to them the messengers of life! hasten to re-

claim them from their idolatries, and to convert them from their sins, before that great and terrible day of the Lord shall come !

Ah! Friends and Brethren, let us realise our deep, personal, individual interest in this fearful theme. We are every one of us ripening, for a harvest of glory, or for a harvest of wrath. Every day we are advancing to maturity either in holiness or in sin. Every hour we are sowing the seeds of blessedness or of perdition. "Be not deceived—God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap: he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." Soon—God only knows how soon—the command will be given, "Thrust ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe!"

Do we flatter ourselves that, because we are nominal Christians, baptized into the faith—and enjoying the outward privileges of the Church,—we have nothing to apprehend at the coming of our Lord? Ah, wretched delusion! For the Son of man will then come "to gather out of his kingdom" or Church, "all that offend, and them that do iniquity," and to assign them their portion with unbelievers. The kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, is like a net cast into the sea, which, when dragged to the shore, contained fishes good and bad: the good were carefully preserved, but the bad were cast

away. The Church is like a field in which the tares and the wheat are growing together until the harvest: then the wheat shall be gathered into the garner, but the tares shall be thrown into the fire. The wise virgins who took oil in their vessels, and whose lamps were trimmed and burning, went into the marriage feast; but the foolish virgins were left in outer darkness. The Lord's fan will be in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor; and will gather the grain into his garner, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

O! what will be *our* doom in that day? This question is only to be answered by another: What are our characters now? If we be humble, renewed, devoted followers of Christ, we may—even amidst the terrors of the last day—lift up our heads with joy, knowing that our redemption is at hand. But, if we remain impenitent and unconverted, where can we hide our guilty heads? In all the agony of remediless despair, we shall cry to the rocks, 'Fall on us! and to the mountains, Cover us! and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?'

LECTURE SEVENTH.

THE MILLENIUM AND JUDGMENT.

REVELATION, XX CHAPTER, 1-6 VERSES.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled ; and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death hath no power ; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

IN our day much is said of the Millenium. It is a common theme in the pulpit and on the platform.

It animates the conceptions of the Poet and the glowing periods of the Orator. It is held forth as the great incentive to Missionary effort ; the glorious reward of self-denial, liberality and prayer in the good work of propagating the Gospel.

But what is the prevailing idea as to that state of coming blessedness? According to the popular theory of the day, the Millenium will not be a new dispensation : it will scarcely be a different condition of things from that which now exists upon earth. There will be, indeed, an enlargement and extension of the Church so as to embrace all nations. There will be a wider diffusion of scriptural truth, and a more liberal dispensation of the influence of the Holy Spirit ; but Christ will continue to live and reign in heaven, just as he does now. The only difference between that state of things and the present is—that then a large majority, or, as some think, all the inhabitants of the earth will be truly pious,—whereas, now, but a small part is so.

According to this view, the Millenium will be the reign of *the Church*, not of the *Lord and Head* of the Church. The Church will continue to be, then, as it now is, under God, the great illuminator of the world. But this state of things would be as inconsistent with the scriptural accounts of the Millenium, as it would be to regard the Moon as the source of light in the Solar System. We love and venerate the

Church : but we cannot receive that formalistic theology, which, losing sight of her merely instrumental and subordinate character, puts her in the place of the great Head of the Church, either in the work of our justification, sanctification, or glorification.

Now we ask—is the wide extension of the Church, under its present aspect and relations—all that is to be expected in answer to the petitions we daily offer in obedience to our Lord's command: "*Thy kingdom come: thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?*" Is this all that is intended by the declaration that the saints "shall live and reign with Christ for a thousand years?" Is this answerable to the state of things described in these memorable words—"I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, *coming down* from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the Tabernacle of God is *with men, and he will dwell with them*, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for *the former things are passed away*. And he that sat upon the throne, said,—*Behold, I make all things new?*"* Is a wide extension of evangelical knowledge and influence, as

* Rev. xxi 2-6.

now existing in the Church, all that is intended to be described by this strong language—"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and *the Lamb is the light thereof*: and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it:"* "thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for *the Lord shall be thine everlasting light*, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended?"†

We need give no answer to these inquiries. For, although we have formerly advocated the popular theory ourselves, and do sincerely respect the wisdom and piety of many who continue to be its supporters; yet, we have taken occasion, in this course of sermons, more than once, to express the opinion that, the common belief that there will be a conversion of all nations to the faith of Christ and a state of universal peace and holiness throughout the world for the space of a thousand years, *before* the second Advent of our Lord,—is, to our view, utterly irreconcilable with what the Scriptures teach us respecting the revelations of Antichrist and the wickedness of "the last days"—and with the prophecies of the awful judgments upon irreligious systems and wicked nations that will usher in the solemnities of our Lord's final coming: that it is also directly opposed

* Rev. xxi. 23-24.

† Isaiah, 60. 20.

to the clearly revealed truths of the restoration and conversion of the Jews—and to what our Lord has taught us about the mixture of the righteous and the wicked in his Church until the harvest of separation shall take place at his coming—and to the suddenness with which his manifestation at the last day will overtake a thoughtless and unprepared world. We would not willingly wound the feelings of our Christian brethren by uttering a sentence which may be deemed dogmatical or offensive. But we must say that the more we reflect upon the popular doctrine of the Millenium, and the more thoroughly we examine it by the light of Scripture, the more perfect our conviction becomes that it is unworthy of support and credence.

Dissatisfied, then, with commonly received opinions on this sublime and delightful theme of prophetic annunciation, we would now renewedly prosecute our inquiries for the truth. With an awe and reverence upon our spirits, like that with which the soul of Moses was chastened when the command was given “put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground,”—we would now endeavour to ascertain what the Scriptures teach us to believe respecting the great day of Christ’s “appearing and kingdom”—his judgment of the world—or, his reign upon earth.

The only passage of Scripture which fixes *the limit of time* to the earthly reign of Christ, and which is the origin of the commonly received term Millenium, or period of a thousand years, is that which we have selected as a text: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

This book of the Apocalypse is full of mysteries, and highly symbolical and figurative in its character and style. Yet all admit that there is herein described, by the pen of inspiration, a series of conflicts between Christ and his Church on the one hand—and the enemies of truth and holiness on the other;—and the result is, the overthrow of the latter, and the perfect, everlasting triumph of the former. Notwithstanding the generally figurative style of the Apocalypse, and the difficulty of interpreting some of its symbols, its common purport and leading design are sufficiently manifest. Even so we are willing to admit that a part of the language of the text is figurative, (for example, what is said of the binding of Satan with *a chain*—and a *seal* being put upon him;) yet the figures are easily understood, and no intelligent reader will be at a loss to infer from the passage these plainly revealed truths. 1. That the influence of Satan will be wonderfully restrained, so that he shall not deceive the nations during the space of a thousand years. 2. That, during the same period, Christ shall reign upon earth. 3. That the Martyrs, and other Saints shall be partakers with Christ in this Millennial reign. 4. The blessed state of things described is called "*the first resurrection*," and over those who have part in it the second death shall have no power.

These truths stand out boldly and prominently upon the very face of the text; and are not to be questioned. But then, the majority of modern divines, like the excellent commentator, Mr. Scott, contend that all these things are to be *spiritually* interpreted. They tell us that there is to be no resurrection of the Martyrs and other saints, but their spirit, or temper of mind, is to be revived in the Christians who shall live at that favoured period.* Christ will not personally live and reign upon the earth, but his Gospel will universally prevail, and he will reign *by his Spirit* in the hearts of men for

*“The term *Ψυχας*, rendered ‘souls,’ in the text, seems employed by the Holy Spirit purposely to fix the meaning. Three terms are employed to denote the constitution of man; *Πνευμα* spirit, *Ψυχη* soul, *σωμα* body, (1 Thess. v. 23.) Where the sameness of character, or common principles pervading a class or body of men are intended, *Πνευμα*, or spirit is employed. (Luke, ix. 55; 1 Cor. vi. 17; Eph. iv. 4; 1 Cor. xiv. 32; 1 John, iv. 1; Rom. viii. 15.) It is the term employed when gifts of federal blessing to the Church, and not personal rewards to its several members, are announced. (Rev. xi. 11.) If a figurative resurrection of principles and not of persons had been designed, the word *Πνευμα* would certainly have been used. The term *Ψυχη* is used with the same constancy to denote what in each man is distinctively personal, and therefore the subject of reward and punishment. (Mark, viii. 36; Matt. xvi. 26. 27. x. 39; Rom. ii. 9; 1 John, iii. 16.) We are thus assured that when the vision speaks of the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, it brings no message of vicarious blessings which Christians dwelling at ease are to receive as it were, by proxy, for the saints martyred of old, but of God’s faithfulness and truth in rewarding with personal glory his once-afflicted and suffering servants.”

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a thousand years. But, we may ask, does not the spirit of the Martyrs and departed saints virtually animate *faithful Christians of every age*? Are they not like-minded, having the mind of Christ? Does not Christ *now* rule in the hearts of his people, by the Holy Spirit? If the resurrection of the Martyrs and saints at the beginning of the thousand years, be but a figurative resurrection,—then the resurrection of “the rest of the dead,” at the close of the thousand years, must be figurative also: and, of course, the final judgment of the wicked, and the destruction of death and hell, is converted into a *mere metaphor*!

If we presume to ask, why this mystical interpretation of the text is to be forced upon us? What is the answer? Why, (such is substantially the answer of Mr. Scott :) the Scriptures inform us that Christ’s second coming will be to judge the world: there will be no resurrection of the dead till the general resurrection at the last day—when all—the righteous and the wicked, will *be raised together*, and at the same time, receive a sentence, to heaven or hell, according to the deeds done in the body: *therefore*, “the first resurrection” means a revival of primitive piety in the hearts of living Christians; and the reign of Christ for a thousand years on earth means the universal extension and triumph of his

Gospel, for that space of time, *before* he shall come to judge the world in righteousness.

This argument against the personal reign of Christ upon earth, is what the logicians call “a begging of the question ;” for it assumes the very point in dispute. It takes for granted that the Millennial reign of Christ and the judgment of the great day are two distinct, different, and independent things. Whereas, the very object of our present inquiry is to ascertain whether they are not precisely the same.

We have been accustomed to think of the day of judgment as a short period of twelve or twenty-four hours, ushered in by the voice of the archangel and the trump of God—the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked simultaneously—their congregation before one bar—their trial and immediate consignment to everlasting happiness or wo. This common idea is chiefly founded upon the description of the judgment which our Saviour gives in the twenty-fifth Chapter of St. Matthew ; where he tells us that the “Son of man shall be seated upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he will proceed to separate them as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.”* Nothing more is represented here, than the everlasting *separation* that will be made by the Judge between the righteous and the wicked according to their respec-

* Matt. xxv. 31-32, &c.

tive characters and deeds. But there is nothing which will enable us to determine the *time* which will be employed in the process of judgment.

The fact of its being called a *day*—"the great day"—"the day of judgment"—"the day of the Lord," and the like, does not settle the period of its duration. For, the word "*day*," though often used in Scripture to designate a period of twenty-four hours, is also often used to describe a *long*—and sometimes an *indefinite* period. Thus we read of "*the day* in which God created the heavens and the earth,"* though we know that the work of creation occupied *six* days, and many are of opinion, that each creative day was a very long period of time. The years of captivity in Egypt and Babylon, are sometimes designated as the *day* of captivity. The forty years pilgrimage of the children of Israel, is called "the *day* of temptation in the wilderness." The period of probation for the inhabitants of Jerusalem is so designated by our Lord, "if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day." The whole Gospel dispensation is spoken of as a day, "Behold now is the *day* of salvation." It is applied to the continuance of human life, as a period of grace and probation: "to-day—after so long a time, while it is called *to-day*, if ye will hear his voice." It is also applied to the world to come, or

* Gen. ii. 4.

eternity: "The night is far spent—the *day* is at hand."* St. Peter, in speaking of this very subject of the coming of Christ to judgment, says—"One *day* is with the *Lord* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."†

As there is nothing in the word *day* to limit the duration of the judgment; so is there nothing in the word *judgment* to confine the acts or operations of that day to the work of a formal examination of the lives and pronouncing the doom of the children of men. To judge, according to the Scriptural use of the phrase, means *to rule and govern*—to protect and bless, as well as to adjudicate and punish. Israel was successively governed by *Judges* and *Kings*. Sampson, Gideon, and Jephtha were, under the title of Judges, deliverers and protectors of Israel; and no less than David, Solomon, and Hezekiah, were types of Him who is to be, pre-eminently, *Judge* and *Ruler* of his Church and people.

The chief prophecies of Christ as Judge show that *Regal dominion* was to be an essential prerogative of his office. "Arise O God, *judge* the earth; for thou shalt *inherit* all nations."‡ "For the Lord cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he *judge* the world and the people with equity."|| "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and *govern* the

* Rom. xiii. 12. † 2 Peter, iii. 8. ‡ Ps. lxxxii. 8. || Ps. xcvi. 9.

nations upon earth.”* “Behold a *king* shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”† “And he shall *judge* among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”‡ These prophecies are believed by all Christians to refer to the Messiah; and it seems impossible for language more strongly to assert the union of his kingdom and his judgment.

We incline therefore to the opinion that the Scriptures which speak of Christ’s coming to judge the world, and those which speak of his coming to reign as head and king of a universal empire, are of like application, and refer to the same great events. If those texts which relate to his coming at the last day to judge the world are to be *literally* interpreted as teaching a *personal coming and visible manifestation*—then we see not upon what sound principle we can give to those which relate to his coming to reign, and establish a universal kingdom, a mystical and spiritual interpretation,—for they are of the same character, and refer, so far as we can perceive,

* Ps. lxvii. 4. † Jer. xxiii. 5. ‡ Micah, iv. 3. Is. ii. 4.

to the *same manifestation*. There are not to be two future advents of the Messiah. The Son of man is to come but once to be seated on the throne of his glory.

The great difficulty which some have to surmount in adopting this interpretation, arises probably from the false opinion that the great day of judgment—or the day of our Lord's second advent, means a common day of twenty-four hours. But, as the day of his first advent, when he came in humiliation, only to suffer and die, covered a period of more than thirty years, why may we not believe that the day of his second advent, when He will come in his glory, to destroy Antichrist—to convert the Jews—to establish a universal kingdom—to raise the martyrs and the saints—to create a new heavens and a new earth—to glorify his redeemed, and punish the wicked with everlasting destruction—will cover a much longer period of time: even that which the text assigns as the duration of his Millennial reign? Surely, if there be any day to which the words of St. Peter are applicable, it must be the last great day—"ONE DAY IS WITH THE LORD AS A THOUSAND YEARS, AND A THOUSAND YEARS AS ONE DAY."

You may now perceive that there is no inconsistency between our doctrine and the account which our Lord gives in the twenty-fifth Chapter of St. Matthew of the division to be made between the

sheep and the goats at the day of Judgment. You have only to suppose, (as the Rev. Joseph Mede does,) that the resurrection and acquittal of the righteous take place on the *morning* of that great day, and the resurrection and condemnation of the wicked, in the *evening*,—or, at its close. As our text declares—"the rest of the dead," i. e. those who had no part in the first resurrection, "lived not again till the thousand years were ended." They are then to be raised; to be judged out of the things which are written in the book, and to be cast into the lake of fire.

That this idea of the sameness or oneness of the day of judgment and the Millenium spoken of in the text, is not idle or visionary, will manifestly appear, we think, from a brief examination of some of the passages which foretell them.

Our Lord forewarned his disciples that after the great tribulation, they should "see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."* Again—"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."† The angel said to the sorrowing disciples who gazed upon the bright pathway of their ascending Lord: "That same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."‡ "Behold the Lord cometh with ten

* St. Luke xxi. 27.

† St. Matt. xxv. 31.

‡ Acts. i. 16

thousand of his saints to execute Judgment upon all.”* “Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him : and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.”† “And I looked and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like the Son of man.”‡ These texts are believed by all Christians to relate to *the coming of our Lord to judgment*, and to teach that there will then be a visible manifestation of his glory as the Son of man.

Now let us look at a few of those which relate to *his coming to reign and establish his kingdom*. “I saw in the night visions,” says Daniel, “and behold *one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven*, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.” Surely this is precisely the same manifestation of which our Lord speaks when he says, “The Son of Man shall come in the clouds—in his own glory, and the glory of his Father.” But Daniel speaks of his coming *to establish his kingdom*: “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,

* Jude, 14.

† Rev. i. 7.

‡ Rev. xiv. 14.

shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”*

You remember our Lord’s promise to his twelve Apostles, given for their special encouragement amidst the trials and persecutions they were to encounter for his sake. “Ye which have followed me,—in the Regeneration”—(i. e. the time when all things shall be made new,) “when the Son of Man shall be seated upon the throne of his glory, Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” You remember also, a more general promise, of like import, made to every faithful disciple. “To him that overcometh, will I give *to sit with me in my throne*; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.”† When will these promises be fulfilled, except at the time spoken of in the text, when the saints shall live and *reign with Christ* for a thousand years? In one of his parables, our Lord, to correct the false impression of his disciples that “the kingdom of God should *immediately* appear,” compares the Son of Man to “a nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.”‡ Now where did Christ go to receive for himself a kingdom—or, authority to reign, except to his Father’s court,—who said to him, “sit

* Dan. vii. 13, 14, 27. † Matt. xix. 28. ‡ St. Luke, xix. 11, 12.

thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool?" The Father has given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father." When will Jesus return to be inaugurated in his kingdom, except when he shall come again in the clouds of heaven, having upon his vesture and on his thigh a name written—KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS?* or—in the language of St. Paul, when he shall "come to judge the quick and the dead, *at his appearing and his kingdom?*"†

Other passages might be quoted, and a more elaborate argument be offered upon this part of our subject; but we trust enough has been said to show that we do not "follow cunningly devised fables" when we assert our belief that the coming of Christ to judge the world, and his coming to establish his universal kingdom,—are but different forms of expression relating to the same great event:—that the day of judgment and the Millennial reign of Christ upon earth indicate the same period,—and will include the most awfully grand and glorious scenes that will ever be presented in the sublime drama of this world's history.

* Rev. xix. 16.

† 2 Tim. iv. 1.

To a brief sketch of those wonderful scenes which the pen of prophecy has connected with the Millennium, or the judgment of the great day, we now invite your attention. We know little of that new dispensation—or “world to come, whereof we speak.” We cannot attempt to explain the precise order, or to give an accurate description of the stupendous events which will then take place. But with diffidence and awe we would give a faint perspective grouping of the outline of the picture as it appears to the eye of faith through the glass of prophecy.

1. *The downfall of Antichrist,—the destruction of the Man of Sin,—the overthrow and subjugation of the enemies of the Lord,—the restoration and conversion of the Jews*—followed by the *conversion of the Gentile nations*—which have already received our attention,—will be, as we suppose, events connected with the glorious appearing of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven—ushering in the bright morning of that everlasting day.

2. The next sublime event which arises to view in our prospective glance is that lovely scene so graphically described in our text, as “*the first resurrection.*” “I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his

image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

We have already shown that this is no shadowy metaphor, no unreal picture,—no imaginary revival of spiritual principles and affections; but a real resurrection to eternal life and blessedness of those who died as Martyrs for Jesus, with all those departed ones who kept their religious profession and character pure and uncorrupt. It was to this the Apostle Paul looked forward with holy hope, when he submitted patiently to toil and self-denial,—to watchfulness, and fasting, and persecution, exclaiming—"If by *any means* I might attain unto *the resurrection of the dead.*" It was not simply that he *might be raised*—which was the object of such ardent desire to the Apostle's mind—for he knew that this would be common to *all* the dead; but that he might have part in *the first resurrection*—so that he might "live and reign with Christ." It was the desire of this blessedness—pre-eminently promised to the Martyrs,—which kindled up in the minds of early Christians such an inextinguishable desire to be

thrown to the wild beasts—to be beheaded—to embrace the stake—or in any way to lay down their lives for the testimony of Jesus.

That there would be such a resurrection of the saints at the coming of the Messiah to establish his kingdom, was the common belief of the ancient Jews. In proof of this it will suffice to quote a passage from the book of “The Wisdom of Solomon.” We make the quotation,—not as evidence of the truth of the doctrine; (for it is from an Apochryphal book,) but simply as a proof of what was the common belief and expectation of the chosen people of God in former times. “But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die; and their departure is taken for misery—but they are in peace . . . their hope is full of immortality. *In the time of their visitation*”—when is that but at the coming of the Messiah?—“*they shall shine : . . they shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and THEIR LORD SHALL REIGN FOREVER.*”^{*} This confident expectation of the Jews of the resurrection of the just at the coming and kingdom of the Messiah, was probably founded upon the remarkable words of *Daniel* in reference to the same event. “At that time shall *Michael*” (meaning one *who is*

^{*} Wisdom, iii. 1-8.

like God,) “stand up; the *Great Prince* which standeth for the children of thy people;”—who is this but the Messiah—the *Prince of Peace*? “and there shall be a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation, even to that time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And *many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*:... and they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.”*

* Dan. xii. 1-4.

This common belief among the Jews seems to have been not only recognized, but confirmed, by our Saviour in his discourse with the Sadducees upon the doctrine of the resurrection, as recorded by St. Matt. xxii. 31-32, and by St. Mark xii. 26-27. Christ having quoted the address of Jehovah to Moses. [Exodus, iii. 6.] “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;” immediately adds, *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*; therefore Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob *must one day rise from the dead*. “But how does this conclusion follow? Do not the spirits of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob yet live? God should then be the God of the living, though their bodies should never rise again. Therefore some Socinians argue from this place, that the spirits of the just lie in the sleep of death until the resurrection. Or might not the Sadducees have replied, the meaning to be of what God *had been*, not of what *he should be*? Viz. That he was the God who had chosen their fathers, and made a covenant with them: *I am the God who brought Abraham out of Chaldee, who appeared to Isaac and Jacob whilst they lived, &c.* But how would this then make for *the resurrection*? Sure *It* doth. He that could not err said it. Let us therefore see how it may.

Surely the precious hope of a resurrection of the saints at the coming of the Lord, thus revealed to the Jews, has not been denied to Christians under the more gracious revelation of the Gospel. We have seen that it is clearly revealed in the text; "they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall

I say therefore the words must be understood with supply of what they have reference unto; which is the *covenant* that the Lord made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in respect whereof he calls himself their God. This covenant was to give *unto them* and to their seed the land wherein they were strangers. Mark it. Not to their seed or offspring *only*, but *to themselves*. To Abraham, Gen. xiii. 15. xv. 7. xvii. 8. To Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 3. To Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 12. To all three, Exodus vi. 4-8. Deut. i. 8. xi. 21. xxx. 20. If God then make good to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob this his covenant, whereby he undertook to be their God, then must they needs one day live again to inherit the promised land, which hitherto they have not done. For the God that thus covenanted with them, covenanted not to make his promise good to them *dead* but *living*. This is the strength of the divine argument, and irrefragable; which otherwise would not infer any such conclusion.

And this to be our Saviour's meaning may appear, in that the Jews at that time used from these many places, thus understood, to infer *the resurrection* against the Sadducees, out of the Law. As it is to be seen expressly of two of them (Ex. vi. 4. Deut. xi. 21) in the Talmud." MEDE's works, Bock iv. p. 801

This learned and pious writer, in further confirmation of his exposition, gives an argument founded upon Heb. xi. 8-9-10-13-16. and also upon the song of Zacharias, St. Luke. i. 72; to which the reader is referred.

reign with him a thousand years." Is it confirmed in other parts of the New Testament? Let us look at the sublime and beautiful discourse upon the resurrection contained in the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. "For as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This is commonly interpreted as if it represented the righteous and the wicked as rising *without distinction at the same time*. But is this really the doctrine of the Apostle? Does he not, on the contrary, in this lucid argument, lay down the precise order in which this great work of the resurrection shall be accomplished? "In Christ all shall be made alive. But every man *in his own order*: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's, at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."*

Does not this three-fold resurrection of which St. Paul speaks—*first*, "Christ the first fruits," *secondly*, "they that are Christ's, at his coming,"—*thirdly*, the rest of the dead, at the time of "*the end*, when

* 1 Cor. xv. 23-26.

he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father," confirm the doctrine which we have deduced from the text—that "the first resurrection"—of the saints—will be at the Lord's coming, in the commencement of the Millennium;—and that of "the rest of the dead"—or the wicked, at its *close*—when the thousand years are ended? Do you think that these different events are too nearly connected in the description, to be so widely separated in fact? We remind you that more than eighteen hundred years have elapsed since "the first fruits" were raised in the person of Christ, and yet the harvest of the first resurrection has not taken place: where, then, is the incongruity of supposing that a period of a thousand years may elapse between the resurrection of the just and that of the wicked, at the last day?

The sentiment that the departed saints will be raised to live and reign with Christ a thousand years, so clearly inculcated in the text, is also confirmed (for we would not have it to rest upon one or two passages of Scripture;) by the glowing description which St. Paul gives of the second coming of our Lord in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (*go before*) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air! and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”*

O, what a sublime and glorious spectacle is here presented to our view! How admirably are these words adapted to comfort us in reference to our departed Christian friends! “We sorrow not as those who have no hope.” Why? We shall see them again. Not as poor afflicted children of mortality and suffering, such as we once knew them;—but heirs of blessedness, and glory, and immortality—shining above the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever. *When* shall we thus behold them? At the coming of the Lord. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death shall have no

* 1 Thess. iv. 13-18.

power, but they shall live and reign with Christ.”^{*} When the departed children of God will thus start up from the abodes of death, clothed in their resurrection bodies—pure—lustrous—immortal—what will become of the saints who shall be alive at the coming of the Lord?*

3. “Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be *changed*. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be *changed*. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”† The change in the living saints will be tantamount to that which the resurrection will effect in the dead ones. It will be like that

* The following words of Justin Martyr will serve to show what was the belief of the early Christians on this point. “I, and any besides who are Christians of a right way of thinking in all respects, know that there shall be both a resurrection of the flesh, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, built, and adorned, and enlarged, as the Prophets Ezekiel and Daniel, and the rest of them profess.” Dial: p. 310, cited by GRESWELL.

† 1 Cor. xv. 51-57.

which took place in the body of Jesus when he was *transfigured* upon Mount Tabor, so that his face shone like the sun, and his raiment became bright and glistening—"exceeding white as snow." Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up with the living saints to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

O, how high our blessedness—how unspeakable our rapture in that day—when we shall behold not merely Moses and Elias,—as Peter and John did on the holy mount,—but Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Patriarchs,—the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the glorious company of the Apostles, the noble army of Martyrs, the holy Church universal throughout all the world! When we shall have "come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel!"† This is the great object of Christian hope and expectation—to share in the glories of our Lord's second coming—to receive "the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus

* 1 Thess. iv. 18.

† Heb. xii. 22-24.

Christ.” “In this tabernacle we groan, being burdened: not that we would be unclothed” (death is not the object of our desire;) “but *clothed upon* with our house that is from heaven; that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”* “We know not what we shall be; but we know that when *He shall appear* we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”† Let this blessed hope be our animating principle to quicken us to duty, and to comfort us in affliction! Let “our conversation be in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be made like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.”‡

4. Simultaneously with the resurrection of departed saints and the transformation of living ones, there shall be a *Renovation of the Earth*. St. Peter, speaking of this subject, says—“The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.”|| Some would infer from this, the total destruction of the earth, and the annihilation of

* 2 Cor. v. 4.

† 1 John, iii. 7.

‡ Phil. iii. 20-21.

|| 2 Peter, iii. 10—By “the heavens” and elements, the Apostle means, probably, the atmosphere which surrounds the globe, called “the lower heavens.”

all things it contains. But is this the doctrine of the Apostle? On the contrary he compares the destruction of the world by fire at the last day, to its being destroyed by water in the days of Noah. The flood did not annihilate the earth, but only *purified it* by the ruin of a wicked generation. Even so, when the risen saints and the living transformed righteous shall be with the Lord in the air—in a place of safety, as Noah and his family were in the Ark, the fires may consume the wicked that will be alive—purge the earth of its uncleanness,—restore it to the original purity of Eden,—and thus render it a meet dominion for the throne of the Prince of Peace, and a suitable habitation for the saints. “We, according to his promise,” saith the Apostle, “look for a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”* This is that blessed state of things of which Jesus spake to his Apostles: “Ye which have followed me.—in the *regeneration*, (or the formation of the new heavens and the new earth,) when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”† These are not the words of a mere man, but of Him “whom the heavens have received until *the times of restitution of all things* which God hath spoken

* 2 Pet. iii. 13.

† Matt. xix. 28

by the mouth of all his holy Prophets since the world began.”*

Then we shall be able to understand the true interpretation of a passage of Scripture which has puzzled the ingenuity of critics, and bid defiance to the skill and learning of commentators: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature” (or the lower creation) “waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the *creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption* into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, *the redemption of our body.*”† All creation, animate and inanimate, which was cursed for man’s sake, shall then participate the benefits of redemption. The Earth, ceasing to bring forth thorns and briars, shall be restored to the fertility and beauty of the Paradisiacal state, —and the *animals*, delivered from the suffering,

* Acts, iii. 21.

† Rom. viii. 18-23.

and laying aside the ferociousness which were consequences of the fall, will live together in peace and harmony, as they did when assembled before Adam to receive their names from him. That is the peaceful scene exhibited to the mind of Isaiah in prophetic vision, which he thus graphically foretells. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice-den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."*

* Isaiah, xi. 6-9.

This interpretation of the words quoted from Paul and Isaiah, many in our day will deem novel and visionary, but it was doubtless the commonly received interpretation among the early Fathers, as has been clearly proved by Mede and others, in numerous quotations from their writings. It will be enough here to give the following as a sample of the views entertained by the early Church. Irenæus, who lived in the second century, speaks of "the times of the kingdom, when the just shall rise from the dead, and reign: when the creature (creation) also, being made new and freed, shall produce an abundance of every kind of food. . . . And that all animals, living on the kinds of food which are received from the ground, shall become peaceable, and one in harmony with another, being

5. The renovated earth being thus prepared for its reception, the New Jerusalem will "come down from God out of heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband." The marriage of the Lamb will take place, for his bride hath made herself ready. Satan will be bound a thousand years, and cast into the bottomless pit, and sealed up so as not to deceive the nations any more till the thousand years are fulfilled. Then the victorious and glorified Redeemer, seated upon the throne of his glory, shall receive the homage of a ransomed world. He will be acknowledged and adored as KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS.

Our belief is that, during the period of the Millennial reign, there will be a difference between the converted Jewish nation and "the nations which walk in the light thereof." That Jerusalem will be "the city of the Great King"—the *Metropolis* of the Messiah's kingdom; that the Holy Land will be especially favoured with his personal presence during the second as it was during his first advent. But we believe also that the light shall break forth from Zion to illuminate the world. "All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall do him

subject to men with all subjection. Moreover, Papias also, an ancient, who was a hearer of John, and a comrade of Polycarp, over and above, bears testimony to these things." Chap. v. 33, 453, cited by GRESWELL.

service.” That every individual upon earth during the Millenium will be absolutely and perfectly holy, I know not that we are authorized to assert. On the contrary, it seems to be intimated that some will be liable to change and apostacy, from the commotions that will take place, and the outbreak of Satan, at the end of the thousand years. We know not that this should seem strange to us, believing as we do, that the demons of darkness were once angels of light; and that our first parents in Paradise, though created in God’s image, yielded to temptation, and became the vassals of sin. But piety and holiness will be predominant and triumphant throughout that great day of the Lord. The Lord shall be king over all the earth. People of all tribes, and kindreds, and tongues shall offer him the tribute of ready homage and cheerful praise. “Holiness to the Lord shall be inscribed on the pots and vessels, and upon the very bells of the horses.”* From every Island and Continent there will be heard songs—even glory to the righteous. The inhabitants of all countries will, with one voice, like the sound of many waters, unite in the loud acclaim—‘Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth: the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever!’

* Zech. xiv. 20.

O ! how delightful is it to reflect upon the glorious result of our Lord's second coming ! upon the peace, the holiness, the universal joy that will prevail in the Millennial period—that great Sabbath-day of the world ! Surely, every pious heart will pray “the Lord hasten it in his time ! Amen—even so—come Lord Jesus ! Yea, come quickly !”

But there is still a sombre shade to be added to this picture. After a thousand years are ended, “Satan shall be loosed for a little season” and go forth to the four corners of the earth to gather those who have been deceived by him, to make war upon the saints and against the Holy city, and fire shall go forth from the Lord to consume them.* This is a dark and mysterious theme : one of those “deep things of the Spirit,” which we profess not to fathom or explain. After that, the resurrection of the wicked will take place. The small and the great will stand before God. The earth and the sea shall give up their dead, and death and hell the dead that are therein, and all shall be judged according to their works. And whosoever is not found written in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire. The righteous will be admitted to the joy of their Lord—the place “prepared for them from the foundation of the world.” They shall have their

* Rev. xx. 7-15.

perfect consummation of bliss, both of body and soul, in God's everlasting and heavenly kingdom. But the wicked shall be cast into "the lake of fire prepared for the Devil and his angels, from whence the smoke of their torment shall ascend up forever and ever." "Then cometh the end." The great drama of redemption will be completed. The Mediatorial kingdom of our Lord will cease. "He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God"—the Tri-une Jehovah—"may be all in all."*

In our next discourse we propose to consider some of the *objections* made to the doctrine of Christ's personal coming to reign on earth, and to show its important *practical* bearings upon the experience and lives of Christians.

Friends and Brethren! We have on this occasion offered some of the views we entertain in reference to one of the most sublime and glorious themes which the Holy Scriptures present to our contemplation. If these views be not in conformity to the instructions of his word, may God forgive our errors, and obliterate them from your memories! But with regard to the great *fact* that Jesus will come again,—that we shall behold him with our eyes, hear him with our ears, and receive from

* 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

him a doom to blessedness or wo, according to the deeds done in the body,—there is no room for a shadow of doubt. Whatever then, you may think of the particulars, let not the great general truth fail to produce its practical influence upon you. Do you ask—"When will Christ come?" We know not. But He will come "suddenly, as a thief in the night." "As the lightning shineth from the one part of heaven to the other, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." In an unexpected hour the last trumpet will sound, and break up the slumbers and the pleasures of a guilty world! Be ye then ever ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. "What I say unto you, I say unto all: WATCH!"

As John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for Christ's first coming, so the Church, by her instructions, warnings, prayers, ordinances, and Missionary labours, is preparing the way for his second advent. Are we, fellow Christians,—faithfully doing our part? Do we labour for the conversion of sinners and the edification of the Church? Do we feel a deep interest in the cause of Missions, and freely cast our offerings into the treasury of the Lord? Do we fervently pray "'Thy kingdom come?'" Ah! soon our Master will come and say,—"Give an account of thy stewardship!"

“What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness; *looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God!*”*

“If the righteous scarcely be saved, *where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*” Ah! what a note of warning does this doctrine of the second advent ring in the ears of the impenitent! In what tones of seven-fold thunder does it say to them “Flee from the wrath to come!” O! when Jesus comes again, he will “be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Repent speedily, and bow to the sceptre of his grace, or you will be of the miserable number to whom he will say—“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.”

Have we, my brethren, embraced the benefits which Christ brought at his first Advent? Do we believe on him with the heart unto righteousness? Are we yielding him cheerful and affectionate obedience? If so: we may look forward without dread to his second Advent. And should we now see him coming in the clouds, we might lift up our heads with joy, and exclaim: “Lo!

this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”*

* Isaiah, ^lxxv. 9.

LECTURE EIGHTH.

THE DOCTRINE REVIEWED : OBJECTIONS ANSWERED: PRACTICAL BEARING OF THE DOCTRINE.

ST. MATTHEW, CHAPTER XXIV, VERSE 44.

“Therefore, be ye also ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.”

It was not without fear and trembling that we presumed to enter upon that course of meditation and inquiry which has occupied our Sunday evenings for the last two months, and has embraced some of the most important and interesting points that can attract the attention of the human mind—or are presented in the whole circle of Biblical Theology. By the blessing of God, the task proposed at the beginning has been accomplished. With much weakness and imperfection, it is true,—but still

according to the humble degree of knowledge with which we have been favoured—with a sincere desire not to go beyond the word of the Lord to declare less or more—we have endeavoured to ascertain what the Holy Scriptures really teach us respecting those sublime themes connected with the second coming of our Lord and Saviour—our King and Judge—Jesus Christ.

We might have given a much more extended course of Lectures upon this interesting topic,—but that every thing which may be considered as pertaining to the romance or poetry of the subject has been purposely avoided. We have imposed restrictions upon the imaginative powers;—and while passing over, with very slight notice, the *symbolical* and figurative portions of prophecy, have not attempted to discuss the *chronological* prophecies at all. Whatever our private opinion with regard to the chronology of prophecy may be—the subject is involved in too much uncertainty and perplexity to be made a profitable subject of popular instruction;—and all positiveness and dogmatism, in this department of prophetic interpretation, should be suppressed by the awful terms in which our Lord declares the suddenness and uncertainty of the time of his advent. “The times and the seasons hath the Father put in his own power: of that day and hour

knoweth no man ; no ; not the angels of heaven : but my Father only.”*

It would have been no difficult matter to have entertained you with the nice and plausible calculations which some have made as to the precise year of our Lord's advent—calculations professedly founded upon those chronological prophecies of Daniel which Mede calls *God's Almanack*. We might also have laid before you the curious speculations and ingenious conjectures in which some writers have indulged with regard to the minutiae of the Millennial kingdom of Christ and his saints upon earth. We have not aimed, however, at entertainment, but instruction. We would rather disappoint than gratify the wishes of those who indulge a spirit of speculation and conjecture in reference to the deep and all important truths of revealed religion. It is a spirit that should stand rebuked in the presence of so awful a theme.

The great object of this course of Lectures has been merely to give a sketch or outline of what the Scriptures clearly and unequivocally teach—or what in our humble judgment we believe them to teach—relating to the great point which has been the subject of our inquiry. We have aimed, not to gratify curiosity,—but, to encourage investigation. One leading end in view will be attained, if you

* Matt. xxiv. 36.

are stimulated to prosecute the inquiry, by the careful study of the Bible, in your closets and on your knees, before God. You may not be convinced of the truth of all the views which have been presented—but the discussion of the subject cannot fail to be attended with a blessing, if it shall lead you to test the soundness of these views by the infallible touchstone of God's word,—and, like the noble Bereans, “search the Scriptures daily, to ascertain whether these things are so.”

The doctrine which we have attempted to establish is, that, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, forty days after his resurrection visibly ascended from the Mount of Olives, and, in the presence of his wondering disciples, went up towards heaven till a cloud received him out of their sight;—who was seen, by the martyr Stephen, standing at the right hand of God—“shall so come again”—visibly and personally—as the Son of Man—in the clouds—“in like manner as He was seen to go into heaven.” We have called your attention to those apostacies in the Church, and those false systems of religion which have arisen without the Church,—to the revolutions and commotions in the governments and kingdoms of this world,—to the scenes of superstition—persecution—heresy and schism;—to the outbreaks of infidelity, violence, lawlessness and disorder—which the Scriptures speak of as *antecedents* and signs of his

coming.--We have shown you that the mixed moral aspect of the character of the world--indicates the ripening of the final *harvest*, when multitudes of converted souls will be gathered as wheat into the Lord's granary--and multitudes of the wicked will be, like chaff, cast into unquenchable fire. We have endeavored to prove that the popular opinion about a Spiritual Millenium before the coming of Christ, during which the Gospel will universally prevail--and the Holy Spirit reign in the hearts of a converted generation--does not rest on the stable ground of Scriptural authority. But, on the contrary, that the universal prevalence of peace and holiness, of which the prophets speak in such animated strains, will be the consequence--and not the antecedent of our Lord's personal coming. When He cometh, "the Jews will be brought in together with the fulness of the Gentiles;"--The Man of sin, and all Antichristian powers will be destroyed:--ungodly nations, and wicked men who may be alive, will be overwhelmed with sudden and "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power;"--but at the same time, "he will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." We have attempted to prove that his coming to judge the world--and his coming to establish his kingdom--is the same, and the only manifestation of himself in his glory, and the glory

of his Father, with his holy angels—which we are taught to expect. That the great day—the day of the Lord—or the day of judgment is that of which St. Peter speaks when he says “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day.” That great last day—will be ushered in with awful solemnity and glory. For “the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout—with the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God,—and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” In the morning of that day the departed Martyrs and Saints shall come out of their graves, clothed with their celestial, immortal bodies—shining in the splendor of purity and bliss. “This is the first resurrection”—the hope of which stimulated the zeal, self-denial, and devotion of the early Christians—and kindled in the bosoms of many an ardent desire for martyrdom. Then, they which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord—shall be changed—in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye—their bodies will be transformed into the likeness of Christ’s glorious body. While they are with the Lord in the air, the earth will be renewed and purified: being restored to its Paradisiacal state, it will be meet for the kingdom of Christ—and a suitable habitation for his Redeemed. Then the New Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. Jesus, the glorified one—the object

to which every eye is directed and every heart drawn—shall be seated upon the throne of his glory—and the saints shall live and reign with him for a thousand years:—“His dominion shall extend from sea to sea—and from the river even unto the ends of the earth.” O ! what tongue can describe—what imagination conceive the peace,—the purity,—the blessedness of that great Sabbath day of the world ! O ! may we have our part in the first resurrection ! May our lot be in the kingdom of the saints !

The views in relation to our Lord’s second coming, of which we have now given a brief epitome, we do not present as matters of faith necessary to salvation. No. We enforce no doctrines having this high claim, except those contained in the two Creeds held by the Holy Catholic Church in all countries and in all ages. We merely present these views as being, in our opinion, a sound and scriptural exposition of that article in which we profess to believe that “Jesus Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead ; whose kingdom shall have no end.” In the creed the *judgment* and the *kingdom* of Christ are connected as we believe them to be in the Scriptures.

This doctrine of the second Advent of Christ to rule and judge the world we teach, not as a mere theological dogma:—we scorn to consider it, as many do, a point of mere theoretical speculation. It is

never so represented in the Holy Scriptures;—but always as a point of thrilling interest—of spiritual power—and of the deepest practical importance to the souls of men. In that light we wish to present it to your consideration now,—and with that view, have selected the words of the Text. “Therefore be ye also ready : for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.”

Before entering upon the practical bearing of this theme upon the experience and life of the Christian, we proceed, as was proposed, to notice some of the most prominent *objections* to the doctrine of the personal advent and reign of Jesus Christ upon earth.

1. There are some who rashly condemn this doctrine, and refuse even to give it a patient and candid examination, because of the false, carnal, and extravagant views that have been entertained *by some of its advocates* in different ages of the Church.

We are by no means disposed to question that some of the early Chiliasts or Millenarians, entertained very gross and worldly views of the nature of the Messiah’s kingdom : We are far from wishing to defend or justify the impieties and abominations of the Anabaptists in Germany, about the time of the Reformation, or of the Fifth-monarchy men in the days of Cromwell : nor would we undertake to

apologize for the bold speculations and visionary theories of certain weak, and perhaps deranged, men who set themselves up as the advocates of the personal reign, in our day. But we say that the doctrine itself is in no wise responsible for the follies, errors, or sins of any of its professed supporters and friends. The most valuable doctrines are liable to the greatest abuses: and the subtle-deceiver of mankind is ever ready to employ human weakness and corruption in giving false views of important principles, that the principles themselves may be involved in the odium, and sunk into desuetude and contempt.

From the abuse of a thing we can draw no argument against its use. What doctrine of our holy religion is there which has not been corrupted and perverted by the folly and wickedness of men? Shall we deny the doctrine of Christ's infinite and all-sufficient atonement—because some men deduce from it the soul-destroying error of Universalism? Because the doctrine of spiritual influence is perverted to maintain the folly and madness of fanaticism, must we, therefore, deny the agency of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of souls? Because the Church of Rome has invented seven Sacraments, and converted them into charms, shall we, therefore, deny the usefulness and obligation of those two Sacraments which Christ has

ordained in his Church? Because some men pervert the Holy Scriptures to their own destruction, shall we, therefore, deny the inspiration of the Bible—or question its high importance and utility as the infallible standard of truth—our sure guide in faith and duty? If then, the abuse of Christianity and the perversion of some of its most important doctrines and usages, afford no argument against their truth or value,—we contend that the follies and errors which some men have engrafted on the doctrine of Christ's second coming should not be permitted to throw upon the doctrine itself the slightest shadow of suspicion or reproach. Our only inquiry should be—is it taught in the Bible? Is it clearly revealed? If so, it is entitled not only to our respectful consideration, but to our implicit faith.

2. To many the views which have been presented in this course of Lectures have the air of *novelty*. They will say—"You bring new and strange things to our ears,—and we cannot admit this unheard of doctrine, without pronouncing the Christian world to have been in error, from the beginning, upon the fundamental doctrine of our Lord's second advent." If this objection were founded, it would be fatal to our doctrine. We are no advocates for novelties in religion—and would unhesitatingly reject any principle which is not clearly taught in the Holy Scrip-

tures, and which has been unknown in the Church of Christ from the beginning.

But is it a novel doctrine? We, of course, do not admit it. We have attempted to prove, with what success others must decide,—that it was taught by the Prophets, by the Apostles, by our Lord Jesus Christ himself. We might, if our time admitted, show you, by quotations from *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and others of the early Fathers, that it was received as the true interpretation of the prophecies in the earliest ages of the Church subsequent to the times of the Apostles.* In common with many other

*The early prevalence of this doctrine has been shown by quotations from the Fathers in notes to Lectures 2d and 7th, pages 29, 188, 193. That such was the general belief of Christians in primitive times, that they were habitually looking for the coming of the Lord, and gave such a literal interpretation to the Scriptures that they looked for him to appear at midnight—because he rose in the night, and came upon the Egyptians at night at the time of the Passover—and because it is written “at midnight the cry was made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him:” is clearly shown by the following passage in Bingham—relating to the usages of the Church at Easter. “Of the vigil between the great Sabbath and Easter-day, frequent mention is made in the ancient writers, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Palladius, Gregory Nyssen, and many others. Particularly Lactantius and St. Jerome tell us, that they observed it on a double account. ‘This is the night,’ says Lactantius, ‘which we observe with a pernoctation or watching all night for the advent of our KING and GOD: of which there is a two-fold reason to be given; because on this night our Lord was raised to life again after his passion, and in the same time he is expected to return to receive the

truths it fell into neglect and obscurity beneath that cloud of darkness and ignorance that overspread the Church, with a constantly thickening gloom, from the fourth to the sixteenth centuries. And although the attention of the Reformers was mainly directed to the abolishing of gross abuses and corruptions, and to the revival of the doctrine of justification by faith, and other principles of fundamental importance in the Christian system, yet there was, to some extent, a restoration of Scriptural and primitive views respecting the coming and kingdom of our Lord. In *King Edward the Sixth's Catechism* we find the following instruction. *Master.* "The end of the world, Holy Scripture calleth the fulfilling and performance of the *kingdom* and mystery of Christ, and the renewing of all things. For says the Apostle Peter (2 Pet. 3.) 'We look for a new heavens and a new earth according to the promise of God, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' And it seemeth reason that corruption, unsteadfast change, and sin, whereunto the whole world is subject, should at length have an end. Now by what way and what fashion of circumstances these things shall come to

kingdom of this world, that is, to come to judgment." St. Jerome says "it was a tradition among the Jews, that Christ would come at midnight, as he did upon the Egyptians at the time of the *Passover*; and thence, he thinks, the Apostolical custom came, not to dismiss the people on the paschal vigil before midnight, *expecting the coming of Christ.*"

Antiquities of the Christian Church, Book xxi. Chap. 1. Sect. 32.

pass, I would fain hear thee tell? *Scholar*, "I will tell you as well as I can according to the witness of the same Apostle: 'The heavens shall pass away like a storm: the elements shall melt away: the earth and all the works therein shall be consumed with fire:' as though he would say, as gold is wont to be fined; so shall the whole world be *purified* with fire, and be *brought to his full perfection*. The lesser world, which is man, following the same, shall likewise be delivered from corruption and change. And so, for man, this greater world (which for his sake was first created :) shall at length be renewed; and be clad with another hue, much more pleasant and beautiful."

Again we find the following remarks upon the second petition in the Lord's Prayer, "*Thy kingdom come.*" "We see not yet all things in subjection to Christ. We see not the stone hewn off from the mountain without work of man, which altogether bruised and brought to nought the image which Daniel describeth; that the only Rock, Christ, may *obtain and possess the dominion of the whole world*, granted him of his Father. Antichrist is not yet slain. For this cause do we long and pray, that it may at length come to pass and be fulfilled, that *Christ may reign with his saints*, according to God's promises: that He may live and *be Lord in the world*, according to the decrees of the holy

Gospel:—God grant his kingdom may come—and that speedily!”*

The views of the Reformers on this point may also be inferred from one or two sentences occurring in the Collects of the Prayer Book. In the *Burial* service of the Church of England—the officiating Minister prays that ‘it may please God of his gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to *hasten his kingdom!*’ The like idea of the connexion between Christ’s coming and kingdom seems to be conveyed in our Collect for the *sixth Sunday after the Epiphany*, “grant us, we beseech thee, that having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as He (Christ) is

* King Edward the Sixth’s Catechism; pp. 361, 362, 374: in Fathers of the English Church.

Should it be objected that these extracts from King Edward’s Catechism are irreconcilable with the 41st of the Articles of Religion adopted in the reign of that godly king;—our answer is that the design of the article was to condemn, *not* the doctrine of the personal coming and reign of Christ, rightly understood,—but, only, as the words import, *the carnal and fabulous views* which some of the Millenarii had engrafted upon it. The Catechism was set forth a year later than the Articles; and as it was the last work of the Reformers in that reign, “it may fairly be understood to contain,” says Dr. Randolph, Bishop of Bangor, “as far as it goes, their ultimate decision, and to represent the sense of the Church of England, as then established.” In this, according to Archbishop Wake, the complete model of our Church Catechism was first laid; and it was in some measure a public work: the examination of it having been committed (as the injunction testifies) to certain Bishops, and other learned men; after which it was published by the King’s authority.

pure; that when *He shall appear again, with power and great glory*, we may be made like unto him *in his eternal and glorious kingdom!*”

If then, the doctrine of Christ's second coming to establish his kingdom and judge the world be recognized in the services and instructions of the Reformed Church—if it was held by many of the Fathers in the first four centuries—and above all, if it may be fairly deduced from the writings of the Prophets in the Old Testament and of the Apostles in the New, we cannot be deterred from embracing it by any allegation of its novelty, made by those who are misled by the popular theory and have never entered upon a calm and thorough investigation of the subject.

The fact is, that the commonly received opinion of a *Spiritual Millenium*—consisting in a universal triumph of the Gospel and conversion of all nations for a thousand years *before* the coming of Christ—is *a novel doctrine*, unknown to the Church for the space of sixteen hundred years. So far as we have been able to investigate its history, it was first advanced by the Rev. Dr. Whitby, the commentator, and afterwards advocated by Hammond, Hopkins, Scott, Dwight, Bogue and others—and has been received, without careful examination, by the majority of evangelical divines in the present day. But we may safely challenge its advocates to produce one

distinguished writer in its favour who lived before the commencement of the eighteenth century. If antiquity is to be considered as any test of truth, the advocates of the premillennial advent and personal reign of Christ with his saints upon earth, need have no fears of the result of a comparison of authorities with the supporters of the opposite theory.

3. But after all that has been or may be said in favour of the doctrine;—after all the arguments which reason, antiquity, authority, and revelation may furnish in its support, we may be met with subtle and ingenious questions which cannot be satisfactorily answered, and many will reject the doctrine because it is attended with *difficulties*.

Vain and proud man would be wiser than God, and will sometimes reject revealed truths, because he cannot explain the ‘why?’ and the ‘wherefore?’ because he cannot thoroughly comprehend and demonstrate the philosophy of them. Bishop Newton says “*folly may ask more questions than wisdom can answer.*” Where demonstration commences, faith ends. If, adopting the rationalistic theory, we resolve to believe nothing which we cannot fully comprehend and explain, the consequence will be that we shall be Sadducees,—having no faith in any thing that relates to religion or the spiritual world. Where is the principle of faith or the doctrine of religion that is entirely free from difficulties in the

view of a finite mind? We doubt not the Being of a God; but can we comprehend or explain the nature and attributes of a self-existent—infinite—eternal first cause of all things? We believe the Godhead to be a Trinity in Unity: but can we explain or demonstrate, upon principles of philosophy and reason,—how this distinction of Father, Son and Holy Ghost—exists—without inferiority or dependence—without confusion of persons, or difference of nature? We think that these bodies of ours are tenanted by immortal spirits which we call souls: but can we explain the philosophy of the union—or the mode by which, without any confusion of properties, they mutually exist and reciprocally act upon each other? We believe that the Son of the Highest took our nature upon him—that God was manifest in the flesh for our redemption: but who can solve the mystery of the Incarnation? Surely the second coming of Jesus Christ to establish his kingdom and judge the world is attended with fewer difficulties than those high mysteries of our religion to which we have now adverted; and if we receive the latter notwithstanding the difficulties which attend them—we cannot consistently reject the former because the ingenuity of its skilful opponents may show that there are some points connected with it which “are hard to be understood.” The system which spiritualizes the plainest prophecies—gives them a meta-

phorical and mystical interpretation—and offers us as a substitute for the personal *reign of Christ with his saints* upon earth—the invisible dominion of his grace in their hearts, is surely liable to graver objections, involved in more perplexing difficulties,—and imposes a much heavier tax upon our credulity, than the system for which we have contended in this course of Lectures.

But the truth of either system must rest, not upon human judgment—but, on divine authority. We make our appeal “to the law and the testimony.” We exhort you to “search the Scriptures,” and bring the views presented to the test by that infallible ordeal. If they be not according to this, there is no light in them. But if they abide the trial by God’s word, then all the cavils and objections which human wit and ingenuity may suggest, will be futile and vain. For “heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot or tittle of his word shall never fail.”

II. Having thus noticed the most prominent objections to the views we have presented respecting the great day of Christ’s appearing and kingdom, we shall devote the remainder of this discourse to a notice of their *great practical importance*.

What frequent references do the inspired writers make to this sublime and awakening theme? How considerable a portion of the New Testament is devoted to it? It occupies a much larger space here

than it does in the instructions of Christian ministers and the meditations of Christian people. The Chapter from whence our text is taken and the following one are exclusively devoted to this momentous topic. The reading of a brief portion will show what unspeakable importance was attached to it in the instructions of our Lord himself. "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."—"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But, as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.—But know this that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken up.—Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

This quotation may serve as a specimen of the high practical importance attached to the doctrine of the second advent by Christ and his Apostles. As an incentive to repentance and holiness to sinners—as a motive for watchfulness, prayer, zeal, and diligence on the part of Christian Ministers and people, more prominence is given to it in the pages of the New Testament than to any other. The Apostles never failed to give point and pungency to their warnings and exhortations by solemn reference to the certainty and suddenness of the Lord's coming. Would Paul make guilty Felix tremble? He reasoned with him of *judgment* to come. Would the same Apostle rouse sinners from careless security and incite them to flee from the wrath to come? He reminded them that the Lord Jesus

would be “*revealed from heaven in flaming fire—taking vengeance upon those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”* Would the same Apostle exhort believers to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things? The same doctrine furnishes the motive:—“*Looking for that blessed hope—and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*”† Does he look forward to the eternal results of his ministry in the salvation of many souls—how did he express himself? “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ *at his coming*?‡ Did he fervently pray that his fellow Christians might increase in faith and abound in love? It was to the end that their hearts might be established “*unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.*”|| Did the Apostle calmly look forward to his own “crown of righteousness?”—he spake of it as one which the Lord would give not only to him, “but to all them also that *love his appearing.*”§ Would St. John exhort Christians to fidelity and steadfastness? what other motive does he present than this? “Now little children abide in him, that when *he shall appear*, we may have confidence, and

* 2 Thess. i. 7-8.

† Titus, ii. 13.

‡ 1 Thess. ii. 19.

|| 1 Thess. iii. 13.

§ 2 Tim. iv. 8.

not be ashamed before him *at his coming.*”* “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he (Christ) is pure. For it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when *he shall appear*, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”† Would St. Peter encourage suffering Christians to fortitude and patience under persecution, what motive does he employ? “That the trial of your faith being much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire; might be found to praise, and honour, and glory *at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*” “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you *at the Revelation of Jesus Christ.*”‡ Would the same Apostle rebuke the impious spirit of the scoffers who inquire, “Where is the promise of his coming?” He says “the Lord is not slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness—but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But *the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*”||

But the time would fail me to quote all the passages which serve to show that the inspired writers treat of this doctrine of the Lord’s second coming as one of the last importance, and of most powerful

* 1 John, iii. 23. † 1 John, iii. 2. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 7-13. || 2 Pet. iii. 9-16.

influence upon experience and practice. How often do they employ it as a constraining motive to holiness! How often do they exclaim, in trumpet tones, "*The Lord is at hand! Behold the judge standeth at the door! The coming of the Lord draweth nigh!*" This truth was ever present to their own minds, to incite them to faithfulness. They constantly presented it to the minds of their hearers and readers, to lead them to repentance and the service of God. Would we have a revival of primitive piety and zeal? Would we behold the word of the Lord glorified in our day, as it was in the days of the Apostles, by the conversion of sinners, and the holy, benevolent lives of believers? There must be a revival in this respect, as in others, of Apostolic doctrine and usage. The doctrine of our Lord's second coming must occupy more attention in the preaching of his ministers: it must take a stronger hold upon the understandings and the hearts of his people. This doctrine must be held up to view, boldly and prominently, as it was in the preaching and writings of the Apostles;—and when duly believed, it would produce the same effect now that it did in their day. It is by faith in the doctrine of Christ's atonement that we obtain peace and pardon; it is by faith in the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that we enjoy that unspeakable blessing; even so by faith in the doctrine of Christ's Second Advent we become prepared for

his coming. As the great object of the Mosaic economy and the ministry of John the Baptist was to prepare the way of the Lord at his first coming ; so the great end of the Christian Church and all its institutions and ordinances—of the Gospel ministry, in all its labours, and exhortations, and prayers is, to prepare for the great day of our Lord's second appearing and kingdom. What mind, then, can conceive the great practical importance of that doctrine with which all the means of grace are so intimately connected?—from which the warnings and exhortations of the Gospel derive their most animating motive, and their most efficient power ? The great object of our ministry, brethren, is not to make you useful and happy in this life, and prepare you for peace in death. No : valuable and important as these ends are, the ultimate and great end is, that you may be *prepared for the coming of the Lord*. The great burden of our preaching should be this : “ *Be ye also ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.*”

III. ARE WE READY ? This is the sum of the whole matter. This the all-important, searching inquiry which I would address to your consciences and hearts in the conclusion of this course of Lectures.

If you are not ready for the Lord's coming, (which may take place at any moment,) no matter

how wise, amiable, moral, or externally devout you may be—you can have no part or lot in the kingdom of God. We see some here who are engrossed by the cares and immersed in the business of the world—thoroughly imbued with the spirit of accumulation—intent upon adding house to house, and field to field—but neglecting the “one thing needful;”—never aspiring to a better inheritance than this world can offer, and making no efforts to “seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” Are *you* ready for the coming of the Lord? No more than were the rich and proud antediluvians for their fate, who heard with listless unbelief the warnings of Noah, and continued to prosecute their covetous schemes; gazing, with proud satisfaction, upon their fertile fields and their sumptuous dwelling-places—till those fair domains were submerged—those splendid habitations overwhelmed by the deluge, and themselves buried in the ruins. We behold others here who are “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God”—who spend their days in indolence, and their nights in the voluptuous enjoyments of the dance or the theatre;—the sparkling wine-cup is often at their lips: the sound of the viol and the tabret and the harp is in their feasts: but they regard not the works of the Lord, nor consider the operations of his hands. Are *you* ready? Alas! no more than were those thoughtless ones who scorned Noah, the

preacher of righteousness,—who ate and drank, married and were given in marriage,—till their scenes of revelry and pleasure were surrounded by the rising surges of the flood, and the sounds of their mirth were drowned in the mighty waters. There are others still who arise to view,—not criminally worldly or sensual, but stupid and indifferent as to the concerns of religion. They neglect the ordinances of Christ's Church, and make no public and solemn profession of faith in the Saviour of the world. Ah, what are the words of the Master himself with respect to non-professors? “Whosoever denieth me before men, him will I also deny before my Father and his angels.” “Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me!” But there are yet others, who name the name of Christ—profess his faith, and outwardly conform to the institutions of his Church, but their hearts are not right with God:—they rely upon Christian privileges without the Christian life;—they have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof;—they are like the foolish virgins, with lamps of profession, but without oil. Are *you* ready? Alas! “when the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: Then shall ye begin to say,—We have eaten and drunk in thy presence,

and thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are—depart from me ye workers of iniquity.”*

O ! what an awful alarm—does this doctrine ring in the ears of the unconverted ! The time is short. Soon the cry will be made, “Behold He cometh in the clouds !” “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found : call ye upon him while he is near.”

“Ye sinners seek his grace,
Whose wrath ye cannot bear :
Fly to the shelter of his cross,
And find salvation there.

“So shall that curse remove,
By which the Saviour bled ;
And the last awful day shall pour
His blessings on your head.”

Christian friends and brethren ! This doctrine is of the highest practical importance to you. Are *you* ready ? As penitent believing followers of Jesus, you have an habitual preparation for the Lord’s coming. But you should also endeavour to keep yourselves in a state of *actual* preparation, from day to day, by cultivating the graces and performing the duties which become those who wait for the coming of their Lord. Our Lord has gone from us with a promise that he will return. We must, therefore, cultivate watchfulness and prayer. “Watch and pray,” is his command, “for ye know not when

* St. Luke, xiii. 25-27.

the Son of Man cometh.” He has entrusted talents to our care, accompanied with the charge, “Occupy till I come!” We must, therefore, improve our time and talents to the utmost in doing our Master’s will. We must cultivate all the habits of *personal* holiness, seeking to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—We must constantly press onward toward the mark for the prize of our high calling. We must labour for the good of souls, the edification of the Church, and the spread of the Gospel, and ply every effort which may prepare the way for the coming and kingdom of our Lord: So that when he comes to reckon with his servants, he may find our talents increased ten-fold, and we may be prepared to render our account with joy and not with grief. He has left us a charge, during his absence, to shine as lights in the world—so that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father who is in heaven. Let us then, stand upon our watch-towers, “looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God!” “Let our loins be girded about, and our lamps trimmed and burning: and we ourselves, like unto those who wait for the coming of the Lord: Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find so doing!”

